

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 257.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1893. PRICE TWOPENCE.

THROUGH THE RANKS.

BY MRS. LEITH-ADAMS.

(MRS. R. S. DE COURCY LAFFAN.)

Author of "*Aunt Hephzibah's Foundling*," "*My Land of Beulah*," "*Bonnie Kate*," "*The Peyton Romance*," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XIV. FOR ANOTHER MAN'S SIN.

THERE was a man in the One Hundred and Ninety-Third called McMurdoock. He had a droll, rough-hewn face, quite red all over, and as rough as if it had been scrubbed with sandpaper. Once he had climbed to the dizzy height of a corporal's rank, but in consequence of too frequent visits to the canteen, had to climb down again; and now reposed with much dignity on the rank of a full private. He was a cheery, genial fellow, and the loyalest soul! One panacea for every earthly ill he clung to. "The Queen—God bless her! She knows best!" If a strap was lengthened, or the cut of a patrol jacket altered, it was still the same tale. He would look at the article critically, and then, in the firm belief that that very article had been inspected by Her Majesty's own eyes, came the magic shibboleth, "The Queen—God bless her! She knows best." Private McMurdoock was aware that the world held a vast company of civilians; did he not, indeed, see them as they went about their various avocations in life, when he took his walks abroad? But there is no reason to believe that he regarded them in the light of fellow-creatures. He appeared to possess no home and no relatives, and had first enlisted in the One Hundred and Ninety-Third as a very diminutive band-boy, being apparently nobody in particular, and coming from nowhere. "What does a man wi' a regiment to stand in, an' a red

coat on 'is back, want with a home?" he would say contemptuously; "it's all very well for them as hasn't got no other place in the world—nobody can't gainsay that—but a man like me hasn't got no call for such luxuries; an' as to relations, why, one chum's worth all the families in creation." A day was yet to come in which McMurdoock was to find a consolation deeper yet in his favourite dogma; for the One Hundred and Ninety-Third serving later on in a deadly and torrid clime, he, lying at the point of death, spoke thus, "It seems a devil of a place this to send a soldier to; but the Queen, God bless her, she knows best!" And so, turning his head to the wall with a smile, spake no more.

But this was a long way off when the regiment lay in Cork, and cursed itself hoarse at the tar-barrels and other devices of the enemy. McMurdoock, hale and hearty, with a word of caution (his own reduction from the rank of corporal doing duty as the horrible example) to all young soldiers as to too frequent appearance at the canteen, and a consequent neglect of the kit and accoutrements, was full of life and energy. Full also of marvellous yarns, and stories of adventure, and it says much for the wit and skill of the narrator that these did not pall upon his audiences, even after many repetitions. There was one story everybody loved. It was called the "Story of the Black Dog," and as a snowball gathers substance as it rolls, had gathered fresh and wonderful details in its career as an oft-told tale. McMurdoock once had known a man—the greatest "drinkist" possible; and the said man had the horrors—"had 'em awful bad"—and saw a black dog. He was always telling them about this black dog, and how fierce

it was ; how it sat by his bed all night, and followed him about all day. Well, one day McMurdoch had a little kitten with him—soldiers, we all know, are fond of such things—and the black dog worried the kitten. "Was the kitten hurt?" some man would say at this juncture. "Dead as a doornail," would McMurdoch reply, bringing his fist down with a mighty jerk ; "and ever after when that man had the blue horrors, every one was mighty particular to take no pet animals along with them when they went to see how he was getting on." Then McMurdoch would glare around to be sure that no man had aught to say, adding that the whole thing went to prove there was sometimes more reality in sick men's fancies than people thought.

A highly idealised edition of this popular narrative was being given for the edification of three or four raw recruits, limp and depressed from long drill under hard-hearted Sergeants, who were unreasonable enough to expect a man should know his right foot from his left.

Not only the recruits, but older hands still, stood in need of a little early refreshment on the present occasion, for the regimental atmosphere was more than a trifle dull, and not even a brisk autumn day, with glint of brightest sunshine and rustle of brown and golden leaves, could disperse the gloom. The great night of bonfires, torches, coffins, and Barrack Street bands was nigh upon a fortnight old. It had been talked over, sworn at, discussed in every possible light, and from every possible standpoint. Nothing could be said about it that had not been said. It had died out as completely as its own fires, of which nothing but ashes remained. Also, like some great crisis in a disease, it seemed to have given vent to much seething discontent, and to have led to a calm and more peaceful state of things. The rebels had shown what they could do, and no one had interfered with them. They had shaken the red cloth in the face of the bull, and the bull had neither bellowed, pawed the ground, nor lowered his horns ; had, rather, gazed steadily over and beyond the waving rag, and opposed a masterly inactivity to the rave and the rant of excited multitudes.

If you make a first-class bogie, and nobody is frightened, bogie-making, as a pleasure, is apt to pall. Things were accordingly flat. True, a strong ripple of discussion had agitated the ranks as to the peculiar conduct of Colour-Sergeant number

one company. He had met the picket the night of the great disturbance, and his appearance had been such as to cause the men thereof to make furtive mouths at one another, and almost drop an unfortunate comrade whom they were carrying—face downwards—to the guard-room.

To think of Gentleman Jack conducting like that—and he on special duty too! His forage cap was on the back of his head, his face white and wild ; he stared straight before him, like a man who sees a goblin.

But the thing passed. Soldiers are easy-going in the matter of drink, and would, indeed, have made small comment but for the fact of Gentleman Jack bearing such a character for sobriety, and being on duty at the time. And McMurdoch flourished exceedingly in the general dulness, and was greatly sought after as a high-class "raconteur." As has already been stated, he was telling the famous dog story—with embellishments. But at the critical moment McMurdoch stopped short, jerked out a quick oath, and sat staring at a new-comer who had joined the group. A grey face, starting eyes, and a mouth that twitched, and had to have a hand passed over it every now and again in an effort to keep it still—Private Harry Deacon, number one company, with a strange unlikeness to himself.

"What's up with ye, lad ?" cried McMurdoch, "are ye qualifying to set up a jin-jam dog of your own ?"

"I've not wet me lips to-day, till now," said Harry, and truly his lips seemed dry and stiff, like those of a man sickening for malarial fever, and his eyes had a cruel glitter and sheen.

"Go on with the story," shouted the men, "don't be baulking the raw recruit, give him the end of the dog's tale."

But the life had died out of McMurdoch's narrative ; he made a lame conclusion, and in a few moments was out of the canteen, and sauntering towards the men's quarters with Deacon.

"What's up with you, lad ?" said the older man when the two were out of hearing of the rest.

"Just that—"

"Just what—eh ?"

"The devil himself, an' no other, an' an' asy time he has wid me, too—for I'm ready enough to listen to the worreds he's got so glib on his tongue."

McMurdoch scratched his head ; it was a kind of help and stimulant to thought.

"Where's Coghlan?" came as the result of the process.

"Is it me that's the keeper av Coghlan?" replied the other with a curse; then turned sulky, and sat on the chair formed by his tidied-up cot, with his head on his hands.

It was a strange thing that these two hardened warriors, Coghlan and McMurdoch, had such a soft place in their hearts for the boy Deacon; and maybe they themselves would have found it hard to explain the matter; but certain it was that, ever since that sunny morning in spring when he stood up to the triangles and took his punishment in such brave fashion, they had set themselves to befriend him. In his heart Coghlan believed that pretty Norah had acted as decoy to the young soldier, and, playing Eve to a new Adam, tempted him to disloyalty. He had even had visions of Harry drilling a squad of Fenians on some breezy hillside, after having constituted himself their captain; visions which, if imparted to McMurdoch, would have had the most terrifying results, since treason to "the Queen—God bless her!" was, in his estimation, a thing calling for instant lynching of the offender.

No, it was drink McMurdoch's fears turned to, and rollicking companions of the civilian kind "outside," creatures who loved to bring disgrace upon the soldier if possible, being willing enough to pay for the necessary libations. Consequently he had no belief in Deacon's protestations of sobriety, but came to the conclusion the boy was hovering on the confines of the horrors, and might as likely as not see fifty black dogs before morning. He hurried off to find Coghlan, but when the two returned together, there was no sign of Deacon, neither could any one give any account of him.

"He's up to the girl Norah's, sthalng swate kisses from her lips, an' drinkin' the poteen them devils are after tratin' him to," thought Coghlan, and then his heart smote him for thinking hardly of the pretty colleen, as the memory of her sad sweet face came over him. "It's quarrelling wid his swateheart he's bin," he said aloud to McMurdoch; "there's nothin' upsets a man like quarrelling wid his girl—the whole worruld seems upside down, an' the burreds av the air mock at ye as they sing in the hedgerows. I'm that way mesilf wid 'Liza whin she an' I fall out—the howly saints be wid us all this night and day; but wimmin causes

a dale o' sorrow, the craythurs. More's the pity, for they're plissant enough whin they're pleased."

"Deacon looked precious like killing his girl, or any one that came convenient," growled McMurdoch, and Coghlan shook his head, but his thoughts were too deep for words. He was not in the same room as Harry; but McMurdoch was not only in the same room, but slept in the next cot. Harry's was at the end of the long row of beds, near the wall; a position much coveted, as it was supposed to give just a shade more privacy. That night McMurdoch was suddenly awakened, and found himself sitting bolt upright in his cot, he knew not why. Some one had rudely interrupted his sleep by the utterance of a sort of wailing cry; and what was that white figure standing by the near window?

The scene was weird enough, for the moon, shining in with a cold, silvery light, touched with whiteness the sleeping faces on the pillows, so that they looked like dead men, every one. It was quite a relief to see one stir and hear him mutter in his sleep. The figure by the window never stirred, and McMurdoch saw that Harry's cot was empty. With an oath that had in it some element of prayer, he crept from his bed. He did not want to rouse the men, and set every one cursing and wondering. He went softly to the lad's side, and then he saw what he had seen in the morning—a grey face, with staring eyes, and a mouth that twitched and worked—but now the eyes saw nothing. They were fixed and glassy, like those of a man just dead. As McMurdoch reached his side, Deacon drew up one hand to his shoulder, fumbled with the other, and, still staring glassily out into the moonlight that flooded the stones of the yard, gave a sort of sob, and cried in a husky, breathless whisper: "My God, he's down—he's down—he's down!" Then his arms fell to his sides, and McMurdoch led him back to his bed like a helpless child, and he fell there huddled and still asleep.

"I tell you he was dreamin' of murder," said the old soldier to Coghlan, relating these things next day. But the sunshine was so bright, the leaves so red and yellow, the band playing so cheerily, that gruesome fancies died out, and more cheerful talk ensued. What visions of the night can stand against the buoyancy of a crisp autumn day, flooded with light and colour?

The band of the One Hundred and Ninety-Third was a celebrity. From the Colonel to the tiny toddlers in the married quarters every one delighted in its music, and we already knew of the unsurpassable excellence of Herr Schaffenhauser, the talented bandmaster.

It may be remembered that there were two bands—the reed band and the string band—and now, on this winsome day that summer must have lost and autumn found, the former was going to play in the Mardyke. Perhaps nowhere in Ireland, if we except that fairy glen, the Dargle, near Dublin, is there a prettier spot than the Mardyke. There in the smooth velvet-green ground is cricket in summer time, carried on with zeal that never flags, while the click of the bat mingles with the murmur of the river near at hand. In autumn the lovely tints on all the woods around make a lovely landscape, in some years a sort of faint reflection of the fair Canadian Fall; and the river shows gleams of red and yellow mirroring the boughs above. From one side of the Mardyke is seen the queenly College on its beautiful wooded height, and, where the bridge spans the water that here and there glides in shallow glassy reaches through the archway, loose-strife and meadow-queen bend from the bank, mingling their blossoms with the sedge and pale forget-me-not.

Add the strains of Rossini or Auber to this scene, and little remains to be asked for. Indeed, happy smiles, and the music of laughter, the murmur of merry voices, and the frou-frou of pretty skirts against the grass made Lieutenant Charles Verrinder inclined to think that life was decidedly worth the living. True, a nervous agitation was to be noticed in his demeanour, but it was a pleasant flutter, and not unconnected with the sight of two graceful figures walking to and fro under the chaperonage of Mrs. Musters. If the consciousness of having made a mistake is painful, a certain pleasurable sensation may accrue from the conviction that the mistake can be remedied. Mr. Verrinder was full of this delightful assurance, and beamed as he walked. Chubby had been on detachment duty since that day when his eyes were opened, and his heart gladdened by feeling that he had made a blunder; and this was the first time he had seen Elsie.

"Our friend seems to have a lot of 'side' on to-day," said a grinning youngster, indicating Chubby, to Blizzard.

But Blizzard knew all about it, and only nodded by way of reply.

Elsie was "so surprised to see Mr. Verrinder. She really had thought he was gone away—to Haulbowline, wasn't it?—for quite a long time."

The two had fallen a little behind, and were virtually alone.

Verrinder looked gravely into his companion's face, and under his gaze, the laughter died out of her eyes, and her mouth trembled at the corners. But Elsie fought hard to carry things off with a high hand. She had a high spirit of her own, he thought, and I would take a lot of taming; but the spirit of mastery was on him. He had blundered once, he was not going to blunder again, and—the present opportunity was precious. The Hennekers were such a very united and devoted family; you generally found them in groups. But here was the sunshine, and the music, and—Elsie all to himself. The grave look that he had turned upon her seemed to strip all the little affectations off Elsie's soul. Her voice faltered a little as she said :

"Besides—I thought—I fancied—"

"Yes!" he answered, bending forward with intense yet restrained interest, "you thought—you fancied?"

Oh, why had she ever begun a sentence she could not finish! Actually the tears were starting to her eyes, but then those waltzes always made her feel like that. They had the saddest rhythm.

"Miss Elsie, I am not a very patient man—and this is rather trying, you know!"

"Well, I mean that you seemed—that we thought—"

"Yes!"

Then out it came with the prettiest little rush of confidence :

"Were you angry with us—with Alison and me? We thought—we fancied—we were so sorry."

"No—I—made a blunder. I could not be angry with you, Miss Henneker—Elsie—because there is nothing in the world I think so much of, but—you know that—"

The soft, low thud of the drum still marked the swinging time of the waltz. To Elsie the whole world seemed swinging round to its sad, sweet melody. The moment had come to her that comes to most women—the moment when a word means a life; when a smile is a gift for all time.

She lifted her blue eyes to his—bashful enough, yet steadfast, too.

"Yes," she said, "I know."

After that the deluge.

At least so it seemed to those two, for rushing seas of feeling, dancing waves of joy filled either heart; and no thought of Verrinder's pay looked upon as a means of subsistence, or of the portly Rector in his Midland parish—not even of Major Henneker—intruded, to dim their vast, supreme content.

Everything was very confused, ill-defined, and uncertain, but oh, so delightful! Verrinder, wishing to enter into explanations, was obliged to do so in a fragmentary kind of way, in consequence of interruptions.

"You see I made a mistake about—Dennison. I fancied—"

Elsie's sauciness was by no means yet driven out of her. The tears were scarce dry in her eyes, yet a gleam of fun shone out like a sparkle as her eyebrows went up.

"I don't know anything so annoying as to find one has made a mistake and—fancied things."

"I don't know about that," said Verrinder, getting red; "it may be very nice to find you have been in the wrong, and to be set right, don't you know? All the same I am very sorry about Dennison. Please forgive me for speaking of him—you see, I feel I have a sort of right—that is you have given me—"

"I have given you nothing yet," said Miss Coquette, casting her eyes down with an exasperating demureness. "I only said—I knew."

"Still, you wouldn't have said it like that if you hadn't—"

Was ever such a gathering of broken sentences known, yet words significant of so much!

At this point much skilful generalship was needed to avoid Mrs. Musters, who had suddenly become conscious that one of her chickens had strayed from beneath the shelter of her wing. Crafty manœuvring baffled the enemy, and exultant in victory, Chubby led his companion towards the further confines of the ground, ostensibly to admire Queen's College glittering white in the sunshine amid its coronal of trees.

Even so, they were worried by skirmishers in the form of little Missy and good Eliza, who had come with the rest of the world to hear the band.

"Oh, Mis—ter Verrinder," said little Missy, pushing back her big picture-hat

with its snowy, curling feathers, the better to look up into her destined sweetheart's face, "Mr. Drummer says the old boy will get the Fenians. Who is the old boy? Liza won't tell me."

"My dear little soul," said Mr. Verrinder in reply, "this is no place for theological discussion. Run back to Eliza like a good girl."

Which Missy did, pouting; but the last glimpse they caught of her she was flying like a lapwing after her friend, the big horse-soldier, doubtless to put the same trying question to him, the while Eliza, helpless and distracted, tried to follow in her wake.

Having wandered far, it suddenly occurred to Elsie that they had better take the shortest way home at once; for the music, faint with distance, had ceased, and Mrs. Musters was doubtless on her way to Monte Notte, consoled by Alison's assurance that Elsie would be safe as safe, for Mr. Verrinder was with her. But Mr. Verrinder's idea of the shortest way home was peculiar, not to say zig-zaggy, and given to falling back upon itself in curves. They found themselves at last, however, strolling up the steep incline of Patrick's Hill, and just then, Patsey's dear bells fell to pealing in the valley that lay like an outstretched picture below.

"How sweet they are!" said Elsie, lingering a moment by the low stone wall.

"Yer," said Verrinder, looking absolutely idiotic, "deuced sweet—er—I like to hear them, don't you know? They—er—sound like—"

But Elsie turned upon him like a young fury, and was just about to tell him that he let his imagination run away with him, and that it would be all very well to hint at wedding bells a hundred years hence or so; when instead, she gave a little scream and shrunk up against his side.

Something that had lain curled in the dust in the angle of the wall, rose and faced them—something that was doubtless human, yet hardly looked so. A shrunken form, from whose palsied limbs fell tattered clothing; an eldrich face, ashen-coloured, with the skin stretched tightly over the bones, and eyes sunken, yet glowing under bushy brows; and long white elf-locks floating on the bowed shoulders.

"For the love av God—for the love av God!" and a claw-like hand was held out, the fingers working with eager longing.

Elsie fumbled for her purse, but Verrinder laid a small silver coin in the outstretched palm, and stood sturdily between his love and the sinister figure of the beggar.

The creature peered round, pointing at the shrinking girl.

"There's love in life, but there's sorrow, too, an' death, an' darkness, an' them that sing in the mornin' will cry before night. Holy Mary, Mother av God, pray for us!"

This sad diatribe was chanted rather than spoken, the voice acrid, husky, terrible. At the last words the creature fell upon its knees in the dust, and then dropped as before into a heap of rags.

Pale and saddened, strangely silent, Elsie and her lover took their way home. What blight had fallen on the first sunny day of their love?

It was arranged that Verrinder should see Major Henneker on the morrow, and then the two parted, and Elsie was soon in her own snug room, where Alison was already arranging her hair.

The two made a pretty picture in the mirror, as Elsie's arms stole round her cousin's neck.

"Alison, I'm going to take the Queen's shilling after all."

"Oh, my darling!"

"But I don't think we shall have much else to live upon—he and I!"

When Alison went down to the drawing-room she found Captain Dennison and the doctor chatting with the Major.

"Let us have some tea, my child," said the latter, and then the chat was resumed, and all went merry as a marriage bell.

Except with Hugh Dennison. His hand shook as he took the cup Alison proffered, and his eyes rested softly and sadly on her face. He had often fancied himself in love, but now he knew the difference. Dennison had found his ideal—found the woman whose whole nature was profoundly true, and exquisitely tender. But she would not yield herself to him to raise his life heavenward, and give him to drink of the chalice of a perfect joy. He had meant to keep away from her altogether, but she drew him as the magnet draws the steel. She could not be all his own; but he might share her sweetness with the rest of the world. He would take what he could get. He was conscious of some nervous tension about the girl this afternoon; but, of course, he could not know how her whole

soul was thrilled through and through with Elsie's happiness. He could only watch the sweet, changing face, and pray that all was well.

"Is this not a golden day?" she said presently. "It is hard to realise that autumn is really here—so still, so sunny everything seems—and fancy having the window wide open like this; it is a bit of summer come back to us again."

A silence followed, as, naturally enough, they all looked out into the sunlit square, and in that moment a sound—the clear, sharp "ping" of a rifle-shot, so clear that it almost seemed to whistle past their ears, cut the stillness like a knife.

The men started to their feet.

"Good Heaven! it is in the square," shouted the Major. "Some one is shot." And he and the doctor were down the stairs in an instant.

Dennison lingered a moment. Alison had not spoken, but she was white as a lily, and in her eyes a great fear.

Before he could find a word that might comfort her, Blizzard, bounding up three steps at a time, came in like a bombshell.

"They said Musters was here," he cried panting.

"He is just gone. What is it, Blizzard?" and Dennison moved to the door, speaking softly. "Is any one down?"

"Yes; Colour-Sergeant number one company shot through the lungs."

Then Blizzard fled, intent upon being of use somehow; while Dennison, turning to say a word of farewell, heard a faint, strangled cry, and in a moment Alison Drew, falling with a heavy thud, lay senseless at his feet.

JUGGLING.

IT is a commonplace to remark on the vicissitudes through which the meanings and the dignity of words are wont to pass. Yet there may seem to be a certain appropriateness in the way in which the word "juggler" has been turned practically inside out. Nowadays, of course, to "juggle" is to deceive, and in this sense the verb was first used by Milton. Tennyson even makes a substantive of it, and speaks of a "juggle born of the brain." Really, however, the word is but a phonetic corruption of "joculator"—merry-maker—the title of an important official in the Courts of old. This again is a synonym for "Gleeman," which was the Saxon name

for one who rejoiced Kings and nobles with all the combined arts of the minstrel and the tumbler. How highly favoured these entertainers were may be seen from an entry in Domesday Book, to the effect that one Berdic, Joculator to William the Conqueror, was rewarded for his services by the gift of three towns and five carucates of land near Gloucester. The simplest form of amusement provided by these officials consisted in tumbling and dancing, such as were long ago sung by Homer in his account of the joint wedding breakfasts of the son and daughter of Menelaus. In later times the Greeks delighted in witnessing performances of this nature; but it was not considered proper for a freeborn gentleman to be himself proficient in them. A story told by Herodotus forms an amusing contrast to the ideas and practice of the present day, when, as the play says, "charity uncovers a multitude of shins," and the high-road to matrimony in certain circles is best traversed by exceeding high leaps and much kicking up of "clocked" ankles.

Clisthenes, King of Sicyon, wished to marry his daughter Agariste well and fitly. Accordingly he summoned the most proper young men from all Greece, and entertained them for a year in order to test their characters. At last, before making his choice known, he gave a banquet, at which one of the most favoured of the assembled suitors, Hippoclides by name, took advantage of a pause in the proceedings to exhibit his agility. First he danced the Spartan measure, then the Attic; then he called for a table, and, poising himself on his head thereon, kept time to the music with his feet. Clisthenes, meanwhile, was greatly troubled; he endured the first two performances, but the third was too much. Restraining himself "lest he should break out upon him," he said, "Son of Tisander, thou hast danced away thy wife." Hippoclides replied with the Greek equivalent for "What's the odds?" and Agariste's hand was bestowed elsewhere.

If the word juggling—except in its meaning of deception—were not almost obsolete, a real distinction might be drawn between it and conjuring. Properly, a juggler may be said to do that which seems difficult without concealing his method, while a conjurer does that which seems impossible without revealing his method. In the former case merely a high degree of physical skill is required,

while in the latter, mechanical contrivances and apparatus are well-nigh indispensable. However, juggling in the Middle Ages was inevitably associated with enchantment of some kind.

Sir John Mandeville, after describing a performance before the Great Cham, remarks: "And be it done by craft or necromancy I wot not." Tregetour or tragtour was another name for juggler, derived from a Norman-French word "tres-getter," to cozen. Chaucer relates how he "saw playenge, jogelours, magyciens, tragedours, phetonyses, charmeresses, olde witches and sorceresses." A contemporary but anonymous writer says in bewilderment: "Outher a tregetour he most be, Or ellis God himself is he."

The accounts of Edward the Second's household contain an entry showing that twenty shillings were given to "Janino the King's tregetour for performing his minstrelsy before the King." Until Henry the Eighth's time there was always a King's juggler in the Palaces; but the profession then fell into disrepute, until in Elizabeth's reign a juggler is classed among "ruffians, blasphemers, thieves, vagabonds, Heretics, Jews, Pagans and sorcerers," and the post was abolished. A little later, again, the title of "hocus pocus" was conferred in ridicule and contempt upon this sort of person. Though no longer subsidised by Royalty, tumbling and acrobatic displays still continued popular, and it is chronicled with some care that the saturnine Queen Mary, on a visit with Cardinal Pole to Greenwich Park, witnessed the antics of a tumbler, "whereat she was observed to laugh heartily." At the coronation of Edward the Sixth, a man balanced himself on his chest upon a rope stretched from the battlements of old St. Paul's steeple to the ground in front of the Dean's house-gate, and so slid to earth; while a precursor of the modern "Steeple Jack" stood upon the weathercock of the Cathedral and waved a streamer. Not content with their own performances alone, jugglers or tumblers devoted much attention to teaching dogs, apes, bears, and other animals—perhaps the "boxing kangaroo" and the "wrestling lion" of to-day are only instances of the force of heredity!—to dance and imitate all manner of human actions. It is to this practice that the well-known proverb, "Man pays in money, the ape in gambols," owes its origin. For in the reign of Saint Louis a toll had to be

paid for all animals entering Paris, and the only exception was made in favour of the joculator, who was allowed to take his animal through on making it exhibit its accomplishments.

Scot, in his "Discoverie of Witchcraft," published in 1584, makes mention of almost all the best known tricks of to-day with cards, coins, and balls, and he also goes to considerable trouble to explain on other grounds than those of sorcery many wonders which would more strictly be called conjuring than juggling. Some of these were managed, he says, by "perspective glasses," others by arranging matters beforehand or by working with confederates. As an instance of the comparative simplicity of many apparently miraculous performances, the case of one Powel may be quoted. This man, about 1760, was in the habit of broiling a piece of beefsteak on his tongue. A lump of lighted charcoal was placed under, and a piece of steak over, his tongue; a spectator then blew upon the former until the meat was cooked. That is the story, and an explanation may be found in the fact that the human skin can be protected temporarily from the action of fire by being rubbed with alum or even soap.

Of the more proper kinds of juggling there have been and still are famous professors. Mr. Maskelyne, at the present time, spins plates and dishes to the most marvellous degree of perfection. In order to perform this feat, nothing is needed, as he tells his spectators, except seven years' practice of seven hours a day, and the best wash-hand basin and dinner service. The famous Robert Houdin must also be classed among the jugglers, for he prepared himself for the eminence to which he attained as a conjurer by learning from a corn-curer, named Maous, to keep four balls at once in the air, while reading a book all the while with comfort. Houdin says that so thoroughly did he learn this art that, after the lapse of thirty years without touching the balls, he could still keep three of them going while he read. It was a curious chance which determined Houdin's career. As he showed great fondness for mechanical contrivances, he was apprenticed when quite a boy to a watchmaker, and was sent one day to buy Berthoud's "Treatise on Clockmaking." By mistake the shopman gave him a volume of an encyclopedia containing descriptions of scientific amusements. Houdin was fascinated, and decided at once upon his profession. He

owned as master in the art of conjuring the celebrated Torrini, whose real name was the Count de Grisy. This man may be said to have juggled a Pope. He was giving an exhibition before Pius the Seventh, and begged the Pope to write something on a piece of paper, which he would burn and restore again. Half incredulous, the Holy Father wrote: "I have much pleasure in stating that Monsieur le Comte de Grisy is an amiable sorcerer." The paper was duly burnt, and afterwards appeared intact in Torrini's hand. The Pope was delighted, and allowed the juggler to keep his autograph testimonial. In 1886 there were in London three excellent jugglers of foreign extraction, named Cinquevalli, Katsnoschin, and Trewy. By-the-bye, the first-named is again with us at the present time. Some of their performances were very marvellous. Cinquevalli, for instance, took a knife, a fork, and a potato, and, after passing them from hand to hand several times, threw them all into the air. He then caught the fork in his right hand, spiked the potato on the prongs, and balanced the knife on its point in the potato. Trewy, again, would balance on his chin a rod, having a long cross-piece upon which small pieces of cardboard were placed. Taking a pea-shooter, he proceeded to hit each of them off with small pellets.

Exhibitions such as these are not now in much vogue, but any one who keeps his eyes open at fairs, race-meetings, and other popular gatherings may still see very good proofs of extraordinary quickness and accuracy of hand and eye, accompanied sometimes by excellent original patter. Does this bring to mind the story in Xenophon of the juggler whose chief and fervent prayer was that his lot might be cast in places where there was much money and many simpletons?

WINTER IN HOLLAND.

THEY do not, in the provinces of Holland, make quite enough provision for your comfort during the frigid winter's nights in the hotels. It is a trial to sleep between the ice-cold sheets of your bed at night. But it is much more of a trial when the waiter the next morning hammers hard at your door, and intimates to you that it is time to step forth into the freezing air of your bed-chamber.

Everything is rigid. How in the world,

you ask yourself, as your teeth chatter in your head, can you wash with a sponge as hard as the bedstead, with half an inch of solidity on the water of your jug, and your fingers in two minutes so numb that you can hold nothing fast, while the buttoning of collar to shirt and the other processes of dressing are as painful physically as they are trying to the temper?

They are a Spartan set of fellows in North Holland, and do not steep you in comforts in the winter-time. Even when you get downstairs, red-nosed and petulant, the odds are that the stove in the dining-room is surrounded with large-bodied Hollanders, who are not at all proper distributors of warmth. These gentlemen will probably be smoking bad cigars and expectorating. If they are talking excitedly, depend upon it there is something doing in the butter and beast market. Either yet one more shipping outlet is frozen up, or, perchance, some iniquitous merchant is trying his hand at a corner in butter or beasts, to the vexation of all honest traders.

However, the walter shuffles in with the white napkin on his arm, and genially shows his teeth to you as he whispers the morning salutation and suggests breakfast. If he is a very communicative and enthusiastic youth, he prattles to you while setting before you the various dried slices of meats which you are expected to consume. There is an ice contest in the neighbourhood. So-and-So and Sc-and-Sc are to meet in a skating match for a gold medal and so many score of guilders. It is a very great occasion indeed. There are special trains from places fifty miles away, and it will be an absurd oversight on your part if you do not go to the course as soon as you have tossed the hot coffee down your throat.

But the hot coffee is rather long in appearing. The selfish Dutchmen at the stove do not budge, and the blue eddies of their cigars curl upwards in excited wreaths towards the painted ceiling. The newspapers do not attract you, unless you too are as keen as the country folk about butter and ice-champions. Besides, they are hard to read, if, as is probable, your knowledge of printed Dutch is limited.

And so you impatiently scale six or seven square inches of ice from the window of the room, which looks upon the street, and seek diversion in the outer scenes. The houses of trim red and yellow brick, with their staircase gables, cloaked pre-

cisely in nice white snow, upon which the pallid gold of the January sunlight shines mildly, are pretty enough to behold. Quite likely, too, as you peer forth, you meet the eyes of a chubby, sympathetic Dutch maiden or full-blown citizeness in her room opposite. The lady, you perceive, has a retreat as snug and congenial as can be. The tall forms of sub-tropical plants flank her at the window—unfailing indications that the temperature of her room is very agreeable. She has also a subtle arrangement of mirrors outside the window, so that sitting by the double panes she can see a great deal of what happens in the street both ways. No wonder the dear soul is able to meet your gaze with an expression of serene self-satisfaction that is never unbecoming, and which in your situation enhances to you such beauty as she may possess.

But even pretty Dutch maidens have tiresome plagues of little brothers. Why, you ask yourself, did this particular round-faced damsel with the large, innocent eyes suddenly throw her head backwards and disappear into the comparative gloom of the interior of the room? Was it from stress of indignation at meeting your unamiable gaze? Not a bit of it. For a moment later she retakes her stand, with slightly flushed cheeks; and she smooths as best she can the dishevelled, straw-coloured pigtail of hair which hangs so bewitchingly between her shoulder-blades. A fat-faced boy now stands demurely by her side, looking as harmless as the moon. He pulled her pigtail a moment ago, and, probably, in a minute or two he will pull it again.

At this hour the milkmen and maids are in the ascendant. How their polished cans glow in the frosty air! You can almost see the street reflected in their bright sides. And the cheeks of the milk-vendors are as apple-red as the cans are lustrous. Tinkle, tinkle, sound the bells, as the milk goes this way and that. The big, thick-coated dogs which draw the little carts do not seem a bit affected by the thirty degrees of frost in the air. They plump down in the powdery snow whenever they think they can snatch half a minute's repose, and loll their red tongues—enveloped in the vapour of their breath—as if it were August instead of mid-winter.

Having toasted his boots to the cracking point, one of the huge Dutchmen now recedes from the stove and makes civil advances to you. But his husky observa-

tions about the weather are not very welcome, and at the waiter's invitation you speed to your coffee as a much more attractive subject.

No sooner is breakfast over than the charm of the Dutch winter gets hold of you. Warmed within, you laugh at the cold. Your skates are to hand—yonder three young collegians, home for the vacation, are arguing about them as they stand at the coat-rack and compare them with the approved but clumsy runners of Friesland. The waiter has joined the collegians, and has already pointed towards you with a discreet token of respect. The scholars are deterred by no false or constitutional modesty from straightway accosting you as you approach to take up your blades. They are burning for information as to their price and special features. The upshot is that you form a fourth in their party, and all four of you hie forth into the nipping air to make tracks for the ice-course.

The students are admirably clothed for ice-exercise. The short, dark jacket, double-breasted and elegantly frogged, harmonizes with the black knee-breeches tied with ribbons. The little sealskin caps on their heads are of course, too, quite the most befitting accompaniment of the rest of their attire. They carry no sticks. It is by no means the vogue in Friesland to encumber the hands. These are either deep in the pockets, folded across the chest, or tightly clasped in the small of the back. Though there is much that is grotesque and unshapely among the Dutchmen of the large towns, you will find nowhere more satisfying figures of manhood than in the northern parts of the kingdom. For this it seems only reasonable to render homage to the winter's ice.

The ice-course is a mile from the town, away among the bleak heathery moorlands. It is a swamped meadow, garnished with cord railings, Venetian masts, with the flags of the nations clinging limply to them—thank goodness there is no wind!—two or three sheds for the sale of gin and ham sandwiches, a bandstand, in which five men, with flame-coloured cheeks and with woollen comforters to the lips, alternately discourse in frenzied bursts of melody, and blow into their hands and beat their chests with their arms; and about five thousand spectators at one-and-eightpence each have already assembled on the meadow to see the much-desired race.

The three students have learnt a little

English at Leyden, which quite absolves you from the need to mould what you flatter yourself—too often in vain—are both scholarly and intelligible Dutch sentences. They are good-natured fellows, like youths of their age and standing all the world over. Twice at their invitation ere you reach the course you drink gin with them. It is but a thimbleful at a time; but you learn thus how easy it is for the humble colporteur and men of his kind to squander in spirits the winter's earnings which ought to have been consecrated to wife and family.

You skate from the town to the course by the canal. The canal has been thus a highway since the middle of November. In both sides of it, near the town, a number of big-bowed green and black boats are frozen up; but the average Dutch boatman will not desert his home merely because it is transformed into a species of iceberg. The smoke curls upwards from his little cabin, and a row of stiff socks and stockings on a line between his chimney and what you may call his mainmast tells of the numerous offspring, who also have to live in the ice for a few months.

The canal ice is not so good as it might be. It is strong enough for anything. Mark, for example, yonder big dray laden with furniture, and crowned by an old woman nursing a baby—it is either a baby or a baby-shaped woollen bundle. With the men that draw it, the entire burden must be something in tons. Yet the ice does not even creak under the weight. But there is one fell consequence of this sort of traffic and that of the various market sledges, with sails set in the direction of the wind—all of which use the canal for their winter highway. The ice is cut into deep ruts like an English country road in the wet season. This is not at all desirable for the mere pleasure-seeker. It entails constant caution, and not a few stinging tumbles in spite of the utmost care.

"Behold, sir," exclaims the most literate of the three students as the outskirts of the town are reached, and the tall whitened spire of the town church now shows to the best advantage, domineering over the red and yellow houses of the citizens.

It is not the church that you are bidden to behold, but the splendour of the local "barn," or ice-course. Each country town in North Holland thinks its own course one of the finest in the realm. The weakness is a very excusable one.

But as at that moment four peasant girls come speeding towards you hand-in-hand, swaying with abundant grace from side to side, and with the dull sunlight gleaming on their silver skull-caps, you are loth to give all your attention to the trivial arrangement of poles and flags and sheds which constitute this particular "barn."

"Look out!" you suddenly cry; but you are too late. The courteous young student, in his anxiety that you shall form a thorough idea of the magnificence of the "barn" of his native place, is blind to the advance of the helmeted maidens. The crash is terrific. The student's head rings loudly on the ice. The maidens laugh and reel for an instant. Their caps also seems inevitable. But no. There is safety in numbers, on the ice as elsewhere, and ere the stupefied student has collected himself adequately again, they—the immediate cause of his downfall—are speeding on towards the orange-coloured sun, but little above the horizon of white fields, low-browed farmhouses, and Liliputian trees.

"My head," observes the victim of their prowess with deliberation, "is not so much hard as the ice. I feel pain at it."

"In it," you suggest.

"I thank you. Yes; I would say 'in it.' You are very obliging to—to—"

But the effort to obtain coherent English from his aggrieved brain is too much for the poor young man, and he comes to a stop with a smile.

Another party of peasant girls approaches, singing as they glide along. This time you and the students give them a clear passage, of which they avail themselves with merry recognition in their eyes, and cheeks knowingly dimpled. As you live, one of these rustic damsels glitters with a golden headpiece!

"Oh, yes," murmurs the most intelligent of the students in reply to your enquiry on the subject. "It is without doubt a thing received from a gross parent—grandparent, is it not? It is in the family. They possess them of the value of two thousand guilders. It is not to be believed, and it is true—on my word."

From the canal we tramp across a snow-bound field or two, thickly dotted with black rooks and grey-headed ravens, and so come upon the course.

A heat is just beginning. There is a subdued hum of excitement from the crowd. The officials in control of the

meeting move about majestically within the restricted lines, some wearing medals indicative of their own abilities as icemen, and some clad in lordly furred jackets which give them a distinguished appearance. They all hold watches in their hands, and follow with absorbed eagerness the progress of the two competitors who have been sent off.

Another minute and the clamour intensifies. It is a close race. Both men are bowed almost double. They do not look very well in this attitude, but the posture seems to aid them. And thus they rush almost neck and neck over the goal-line amid the resonant plaudits of the bystanders.

Then follows a brief but energetic dispute between a furred official and another gentleman. They disagree as to the fraction of a second. However, the referee interferes and reconciles them outwardly; though each goes his own way unconvinced. It makes a great difference whether you win your heat by two-thirds of a second or three-quarters of a second.

The crowd and the excitement conjoined soon separate you from your student friends. These have a hundred acquaintances on the course. They are exceedingly anxious to introduce you—or rather your skates—to certain of their comrades. But, being of an unobtrusive disposition, you are not eager to become the cynosure of a hundred curious rather than admiring or even respectful pair of eyes, and so you allow circumstances to whirl you away from the courteous youths.

The races are not to you a very great affair. You do not know Dirk from Jan, nor Hans from Peter. Therefore, when you have seen three or four heats, and noticed the same disputation about the fractions of a second at the end of each of them, you glide hither and thither at your own sweet will.

It is a pity the Dutchmen pollute the fine strong air with so much pestilential tobacco. Most of their cigars are of the kind for which you pay a penny for five. As fast as they smoke one they light another, so that it is possible in an afternoon's brisk movement to consume two-pennyworth of the articles.

This it is, no doubt, that compels towards the consumption of so much gin. You find your way into one of the refreshment booths, and take your thimbleful with the rest. If you are hungry, there is plenty of half-raw meat between slabs of bread to

regale upon. There are also portly cubes of cake, which the girls with the silver headgear and white lace over—making them look like grandmothers while still in their teens—eat in no half-hearted manner. There is not much that is false about the average Dutch girl of the north, from the teeth and hair of her head to her red cheeks and childlike nature.

After a couple of hours you are content to leave Hans, Dirk, Jan, Peter, and the others to fight their battles unhonoured by your presence. The short January day has begun to set downhill. The sky is a dusky red in the west, and by the numbness of your fingers and nose you know full well that the thermometer is briskly lowering again for a bitter night.

Wherefore you return to the canal, resolved to have an hour's spin into the country on your own account ere returning to the town and your indifferent hotel, with its rather coarse dinner-table and very coarse Dutch commercial travellers clustered round the stove.

It is a bracing, hearty experience. You are going the way of the market carts and sledges this time, and can easily out-pace them. Still, it is humiliating, as you speed along at what you are convinced is a most creditable rate, to be overtaken by a weather-beaten old dame with a basket on her head. She gives you a severely restrained nod as she passes. It is as clear as anything that she has but a poor opinion of your craft as an iceman.

Of landscape you do not get much that is engrossing here in North Holland. It is so in summer and winter alike. Two or three church spires in the distance, betokening hamlets; any number of stumpy farmhouses, frost-bound in all their parts; and the above-mentioned trees; these almost exhaust the details of your surroundings.

But they do not quite exhaust the list. One other feature insists on recognition. North Holland, indeed Holland everywhere, would be duller than it is were it not for its windmills. They are of many kinds and colours: chestnut-brown, green, white as the snow around them, black as your boots, primrose hued, or a watery scarlet; and with bases shaped housewise, boatwise, or in various hybrid ways. Whether their sails be sweeping round with that inimitable grace of theirs, or they are standing still, they are always welcome objects. In their neighbourhood, too, are sure to be not a few frosted sheep,

and companies of birds more numerous than elsewhere.

The hour's run outwards is wholly pleasurable. Not so the return. By this time the baby moon has come into emphatic existence, and the red sun has sunk into the effulgence of misty crimson and gold in the west. The ruts in the ice are not now so readily avoided—nor are the carts and peasants, returning home after their day in town.

It is only to be expected, therefore, that you capsise prone upon the canal three or four times ere you again get into the compass of the town, with its frost-bound boats and quaint little bridges, under which you have to duck discreetly if you do not wish to split your already aching skull. The school-children have taken possession of the canal precincts within the town, and their merry shouts echo up and down the placid streets wherever the waterway goes.

There is something unique about the aspect of these little towns under the starlight. The effect upon you is as tranquillising as a camp in the desert.

"Well, mynheer," says the aproned master of the hotel as you take your place at the dinner-table, "haf you hat goot day?"

"Very good day," you reply. Then down falls the master's carving-knife upon the red joint, and the big Dutchmen, your companions, tuck their napkins into their necks and glower at the meat until their turn comes.

MISTRESS SARAH'S ROMANCE.

A COMPLETE STORY.

SHE was mostly called "Mistress Sarah." Even the Rector had fallen into the prevalent habit. Her surname was Buggs, which, it was generally conceded in the parish, had an uncivil sound—as applied to a lady. And yet the family had been established in Gusserton for centuries. If you had good eyes and a taste for such exploration, you might in the Gusserton churchyard have discovered divers stunted brown stone monuments, with cherubs and trumpets, bearing seventeenth-century dates and the name of Buggs. But in those days they seem to have spelled the name with only one "g," which of course, however, was only to be ascribed to laziness in the stonemason.

Mistress Sarah was fifty—"a middlin'

age for a woman," as the landlady of the "Hoppers' Arms" once said, with especial reference to Miss Buggs. She was small and stout, without being unwieldy. Unwieldy, indeed! A woman who kept the old Red House Farm going as she did could hardly be unwieldy. It was often accounted a wonder that she did not dispose of it, and retire to a state of comfortable and respected private independence in the Cathedral Close of Bester, only ten miles away. That is what nine maiden ladies out of ten, circumstanced as she was, would surely have done. But Mistress Sarah was not a common woman.

She had kindly grey eyes, dark hair, a mouth that looked far more positive than it really was, and a complexion that still possessed much of its earlier beauty.

At twenty, Mistress Sarah had been "somethin' worth lookin' at!" So the old folk of Gusserton said, though the newer generation scoffed at such talk.

She lived all alone in the Red House. That is to say, she had servants enough, but no blood relative to take off the chill of her solitude. It was a marvellous thing to most folks why she had rejected suitor after suitor during her prime—say from four-and-twenty to five-and-thirty. Her father was alive in those days, and had been made quite testy by this strange conduct. He did not like to leave the Red House property to a daughter, but there was no help for it, since he had not a son. He liked infinitely less to think of its eventual transmission to alien hands after the death of his Sarah, unwedded.

It was a charming old residence—three-storeyed, with stone mullions and a stone balustrade at the roof-line. Its façade was draped with roses, wisteria, and Virginia creeper, which each in their season made it a sight to warm the cockles of an artist's heart. On either side of it were low green hills; behind it was a coppice, sloping gently backwards; in front you approached it by a drive between undulating pasture-land, set about with just enough spreading old oaks and chestnut-trees to give the idea, without the conviction, of a park. For a mere farmhouse it was, in fact, a fine place. And the white cowls of the huge kilns, and the extensive mellowed out-buildings adjacent on the one side, added to its attractiveness.

Such was the abode in which Mistress Sarah enjoyed her single blessedness. Even at fifty she might have got a husband with little effort, if she had wished.

Two scenes in the lady's life in earlier days explain sufficiently her standpoint. They were both still so fresh in her retentive mind that they may be described as having occurred but yesterday.

It was a bright September morning; such a day as the hop-farmer loves to see, especially if his yards are packed with the human riff-raff of town and country who represent his hop hands. The Red House hop-fields were full of promise; the cones crisp and large; no blight anywhere; and ten acres more under cultivation than in any year previously mentioned in the domestic annals. Farmer Buggs was a happy man, and his daughter, "beautiful Miss Sarah," as the dependents who loved her called her, was even happier than her father in the strong pride of his health, and strength, and worldly well-being.

Miss Sarah had risen at half-past five, and by six was out in the keen fresh air and the dewy grass. She stole through the shrubbery and across the orchard, and ere the Gusserton church tower had tinkled six o'clock she was in the arms of her hero, the immaculate, the glorious and incomparable Michael.

Michael Nethersleigh was the only son of Farmer Nethersleigh, of Bowstoke. He was handsome as a man need be to win a maiden heart, dissipated, and thirty. His reputation in the district was bad—in the Bowstoke district, that is. Bowstoke is ten miles from Gusserton. But what cared the pretty Sarah for the lies the world told about him, so long as she knew from his own lips that she was his darling, the only girl he had ever really loved, and the maiden who—and he would swear it, looking magnificent the while—was meant by heaven and earth to be his wife?

They had often met, these two, during the last six months. Farmer Buggs fancied the recent brightness in his girl's eyes was due to the new health she obtained from a wonderful new corset, or something of that kind. He knew nothing about Michael Nethersleigh except what he heard at the farmers' ordinary at Bester and Pachester. What he heard on these occasions was not calculated to raise Michael in his regard—especially if old Nethersleigh's place at table was vacant.

Michael and Sarah had kissed, and looked in each other's eyes, and kissed again, ere the girl broached the subject that was nearest her heart.

"You know you promised," she mur-

mured, "and on my birthday you can't refuse."

"I'll not refuse, you can take your oath," replied the other.

"Well, then, you've got to come back with me and tell father all about it. I do so want him to know. He will be glad, Michael, when he sees who you are."

But Michael did not seem to think so. Much persuasion was needful to exorcise from him the sudden gloom that got hold of him; and very much more afterwards to induce him to submit to the guidance of Sarah's fairy fingers, which gripped him so lovingly by the arm.

It came about at length, however. The young man fastened his eyes on the girl, and for a moment or two there was something of real nobility in his expression as he said tremulously, and with ill-restrained passion :

"If only the old man would see it, you'd be the making of me, my little darling!"

Sarah liked these words so well that she stood on tiptoe to kiss the lips that had uttered them. Her grey eyes sparkled with joy. Of course "the old man" would see it—especially on her birthday!

But disillusionment came all too soon. Michael Nethersleigh's instinct had not played him false.

They were approaching the farmhouse by the orchard, openly and hand in hand—an idyllic spectacle—when Farmer Buggs faced them, riding-whip in hand, and with his legs set apart as if he meant to keep his balance. The pretty Sarah had just time to whisper: "Now, be bold," when her father broke from his attitude of amazement and fell upon the pair.

"Take yourself off," he cried, pointing with the leather of his whip at young Nethersleigh.

"But, father—" began Sarah.

And her lover also, having first uncovered his head—an extraordinary token of contrition and humility in him—ventured to exclaim :

"Please to give me a few—"

He had no time to finish, however.

"By Heaven," cried Farmer Buggs, "I'll not stand this. A reptile like you holding my girl's hand!"

The riding-whip crashed upon young Michael's uncovered head—twice. The victim stood to bear the blows. The whip would have descended a third time had not Sarah thrown herself, screaming, into her father's arms. She had fainted.

"I hope some day you will be sorry for this, sir, and I wish you good morning," said young Nethersleigh, who then, with one yearning look at the white shape embarrassing his assailant, turned away and went home—heedless of his fallen hat.

Scene the second is far less sensational.

Eleven hopping seasons have gone by. The "beautiful Miss Sarah" has already grown into "Mistress Sarah." Her father having died three years back, she is ruler at the Red House, and a shrewd though indulgent ruler into the bargain.

There was some trouble with the hop hands. It had been the same the two previous years. This dangerous assemblage of tramps, gipsies, and discontented artisans and iron-workers had struck once more. They wanted to pick five bushels to the shilling instead of six. They fancied they might do as they pleased with a woman for the "gaffer."

Mistress Sarah girded herself for the combat, put on her spectacles—it was too early in her life for the things, but she did not now think much about her personal appearance—and with a sun-hat on her head, and attended by her trusty man Joseph, went forth to do battle with the malcontents.

And she beat them, too. The year had not been a good one. The Red House Farm balance was like, indeed, to be on the wrong side. Both mould and "aphis" had been sadly at work on the bines, and the weather for the picking had not thus far been kind.

"My friends," she said to the ring-leaders of the revolt, "I am sorry I cannot give you a bushel less to the shilling this year. As it is, I expect to be a loser on the picking. If you think I am doing you a wrong you must leave off, that's all. You shall be paid according to the schedule, and I'll take my chance of other hands. I shall not mind sacrificing half the harvest. You ought—at least, the experienced ones among you ought—to see what that means."

There was some grumbling, of course, and a good score or two of hands did leave—to drink off their earnings at the "Hoppers' Arms." The others, however, yielded to reason. It was a bad year—there was no denying it. And at any rate, the bushellers had promised not to press the hops tightly while measuring them.

Joseph and his mistress were leaving the fields for the house again, when at a gate in a lane they saw a man and a little

girl. The man looked odd; his mouth moved like one in an epilepsy. Nevertheless, Mistress Sarah's heart bounded at sight of him.

She had neither seen nor heard aught of Michael in the meantime. He had sent her one little letter, telling her that he should come back to claim her when he felt worthy of her. She had waited, and meant to wait. And now her heart told her that the moment had arrived. It was nothing to her staunch, true nature that the man was palpably a wreck of humanity.

"Ask them, Joseph, if they want to join the other pickers," she said. The man turned to look at her to see why her voice sounded so queer. But he did her bidding.

"Yes, indeed," replied the girl, who then told that her companion was a "loony." "He's bin off his head, miss," the child went on to say, "ever since I've had to do w' him."

"Are you his—his daughter?" Mistress Sarah asked, with growing grief at the heart.

"Not me," was the instant and contemptuous answer. "My father's a travelling tinker. I've took up w' him to see if it pays—he has fits that's frightful to see. We made a 'arf-crown, pretty nigh, out of the last."

While the girl spoke, Mistress Sarah scanned the man. There was a long mole on his throat. She knew that mole. There was a slight distortion to the right nostril, and that also she recognised. His eyes she searched in vain. Alas! all the virile pride and glory had gone from them. They were now bloodshot and faded, and eloquent of infinite suffering and degradation. The hands, too, once so strong and so comfortable when clasped about her, were now knotted, and quivering, and miserable to see.

All her first half-anxious doubts left her.

"Joseph," she said, "take this poor fellow into the house—the parlour."

Joseph exclaimed: "The parlour, Miss Sarah?" as he might have uttered a vigorous oath.

"Yes, the parlour," was the reply.

Thus Mistress Sarah regained her heart's idol, and, all shattered and mired though it was by unnameable and unknowable experiences, she joyously—to herself alone—acknowledged her true allegiance to it.

Her secret was her own. She was glad that the dispersal of the Nethersleighs of

Bowstoke put her under no moral compulsion to share it with any one. Michael's father had come down in the world and had died insolvent. No one, except just herself, cared two oat-straws about the discovery of this sheep that was lost.

The Red House domestics and the gossips of Gusserton expressed their surprise at the detention in the farm of this unrepresentable and unmannerly stranger. Decently dressed and cleaned, he looked, of course, more respectable than when Mistress Sarah had first set eyes on him at the field gate. But he was still an outlaw, an alien among mankind. It could not be otherwise. A man who gibbered at his benefactress, and could not walk three steps without risk of collapse, was not likely to be thought much of.

In time he was removed from the farm to a little white cottage at the extremity of the village. The cottage was soothing to see, with its diamond window-panes, its white roses on its walls, and the honeysuckle which, in the summer-time, made its gabled porch a sweet nook to rest in. There were but four rooms to it. Two of these were devoted to Silly Mark, as Gusserton called him. The other two were tenanted by the old dame whom Mistress Sarah paid, and paid well, to look after her pensioner.

Mistress Sarah walked daily from the farm to the cottage. At first, encouraged by medical opinion, she had hoped morning after morning to see the spark of reason show once more in her lover's dulled eyes. But the years went by, and he did not change. At least, he did not change in that direction. He became stout, and his drivel took a funny turn. He would sit, for instance, in the garden and laugh the true idiot's laugh for hours on end. And nothing pleased him better than to have the Gusserton school-children clustered about the palings of his garden, laughing, and egging him on to new imbecilities. But when Mistress Sarah appeared the children would vanish, and leave her to enjoy Silly Mark's pleasantries alone.

It was Mistress Sarah who had suggested that her protégé's name was Mark. She dared not call him Michael in public. And it seemed to matter little, seeing that even when she had him to himself and pleaded with his laggard understanding, addressing him as "Michael," and "dear Michael," she produced no effect. He liked to have her with him, that was evident. The faces he made when they twain were alone would

have enchanted the school-children ; but not one iota of intelligence did he show from first to last.

This state of things endured for twenty years. Mistress Sarah's devotion was unique. Gusserton had long grown reconciled to the anomaly of it. Even the Rector—he was of but five years' residence in the village—had ceased to marvel at it.

And so the keen winter of 1890 approached, and instead of sitting in the sunshine among the bees and mignonette, with the pleasant view of the Gusserton valley green and radiant to one side, old Mark sat in his arm-chair and grinned at the red coals in the fire.

The doctor had hinted to Mistress Sarah that the idiot's constitution had weakened of late, and that severe cold would try him seriously. And when the snow came, and a biting frost that turned solid the Gusserton brook as well as the ponds, it was evident that the doctor was right. Silly Mark resented more and more the being drawn from his warm bed in the morning. His limbs seemed to stiffen, and his face grew more and more lack-lustre. Old Mary, who looked after him, did her best with him, but she too confirmed the doctor's belief that he was dwindling away.

They noticed in Gusserton the extraordinary look of anxiety that now became settled upon Mistress Sarah's brave little face. It was visible even through the veil she had come to wear. But none associated it with Silly Mark. That seemed too absurd.

And yet, in the good little woman's heart there was now one great hope omnipresent. It had been told her that people with clouded minds often, when nearing their end, were blessed with an instant or two of sane vision. If only Michael might recognise her, and once press her hand with the touch that means a communication from heart to heart, she would be content, and more than content.

Christmas Day came and went. On Christmas Eve Mistress Sarah had given the sick man a little piece of mistletoe.

"See here, Michael," she had whispered as they sat knee to knee, "there's no one else I would do this for!" and she had kissed the drawn lips beneath the little twig. Afterwards she had given him the sprig, and he had—eaten it, before she could interfere.

"Failing fast," said the doctor, when he saw him the next day. But he did not attribute anything to the mistletoe.

The following morning, while Mistress Sarah was at breakfast, little Betty Graham from the mill scampered through the snow of the Red House drive, to bid Mistress Sarah hurry to the cottage.

"He's going," she said, alluding to Silly Mark.

He seemed, indeed, quite gone when the little lady, trembling and with tears in her eyes, came to his bedside and lifted his white, nerveless hand.

"Will you be wanting me to stay for it?" asked old Mary ; and Mistress Sarah said "No."

From nine o'clock until past twelve she sat watching the quiet face, which already seemed settling into the dignified repose of death. His breath just came and went. His eyes did not open. And all the time Mistress Sarah was praying her selfish prayer that she might be recognised.

Between twelve and one she left the room for a moment or two ; and old Mary must needs steal in and put a Bible under the idiot's head. She had some old-fashioned notions, and this was one of them.

"He'll go easy now," she said to herself.

Hardly had Mistress Sarah re-entered the room, indeed, when Silly Mark stirred in the bed and opened his eyes very wide ; the look came into them, and he cried "Ah!" and tried to lift his arms.

That was all.

But it was enough for Mistress Sarah. When old Mary again came in she found the lady sobbing, "Oh, Michael—Michael!" with her face side by side with the dead face on the pillow.

Mistress Sarah enjoyed one more thoroughly contented hour, sitting with her dead lover of past days, and then she returned to the Red House Farm. There she still continues to live. The little cottage is still rented by her, and old Mary is its tenant. Both are, in her esteem, too sacred to pass into other hands.

There is a bright grave in the Gusserton churchyard, with a small head-stone bearing the initials "M. N." No grave is better kept. And Mistress Sarah has left explicit instructions in her will for its maintenance in good order when she, too, rests beneath its trim green coverlet.

OLD JOKES IN NEW FORMS.

THE world would seem to be very easily satisfied in the matter of its jokes. Though they may be hoar with age, and feeble

about the joints, it takes no objection. It indulgently suffers a sixteenth-century jest to be served up again in the nineteenth, and deigns to laugh. Perhaps the world is of opinion that the quip, epigram, or "bon mot," which outlives the chance and change of two or three hundred years, possesses a certain vitality which entitles it to respect. Perhaps it likes the old familiar faces, even when an attempt is made to smooth down the wrinkles of age and refurbish the faded complexion. At all events, it is obvious enough that many of the "good things" which ever and anon are put into currency as if they were freshly coined, really belong to ancient mints, and have changed hands many a time before they came into ours! For example, here is the original—if, indeed, there be not an older original—of an amusing anecdote which has had more lives than one, and has, I believe, been labelled with several names. A famous "chef de cuisine" revelled in dirt from head to foot, so that not an inch of his corporeality could be described as clean except the tip of his fore-finger, which he was constantly dipping into his sauces to test their flavour. One day his patron said to him: "What dirty hands you have!" "Ah, Monsieur, ce n'est pas rien; you should see my feet!"

To the best of my belief, this story was first published in the "*Encyclopédie*"; yet it has been associated with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and also with Madame de Staël.

It happened one day that the gallant Chevalier Bussy, having accompanied some ladies to the menagerie at the Tuilleries, was invited by the fairest and proudest to recover her glove, which she had dropped into the lion's den. Sword in hand, Bussy entered the pit, and picked up the glove without any menacing movement on the lion's part. Returning it to "la Belle Dame sans Merci," he gave her a slight tap on the cheek, and said: "Take it, and another time do not involve a brave man in a needless risk."

This picturesque incident is related by Tallemant des Réaux in his "*Histoire du Comte de Montsoreau*." But it is also told by Brantôme, who makes its hero a Marquis de Lorges, and varies the details. This latter version Schiller has expanded into a fine ballad, which Leigh Hunt has imitated, and both Lord Lytton and Sir Theodore Martin have translated. Lord Lytton, by the way, remarks that the

original is in Saint Foix's, "*Essai sur Paris*." For myself, I think it probable that the story has an Eastern original. It is worthy of note that Robert Browning has also treated the incident, "more suo," putting the narrative into the mouth of Pierre Ronsard.

We are reminded of a favourite form of American humour by the following gasconade. A young Gascon, describing an adventure in which he and his sword had been engaged, confessed to having received a box on the ear. "Oh, and what then?" enquired his hearers. "What then? Ob, the man was buried next day!"

The Duc de Roquelaure was a man of great ugliness and much humour. One day he met in the street a most unlovely-looking Auvergnat, who had some petition or memorial to present at Versailles. He immediately introduced him to Louis the Fourteenth, remarking that he was under a special obligation to him. The King granted the favour asked for, and then enquired of the Duke what might be the nature of the obligation. "But for him, your Majesty, I should be the ugliest man in your dominions!"

I am reminded of Heidegger, the manager of the Opera House in the Haymarket, when George the Second was King. One day he laid a wager with the Earl of Chesterfield that he would not find in all London an uglier face than his. After a long search the Earl produced a woman of St. Giles's, who, at first, seemed to outvie the manager; but when the latter put on the woman's headgear, his superior ugliness was at once admitted.

It would be uncharitable, perhaps, to describe Fontenelle as impious, but it must be confessed that he showed himself as indifferent on religious matters as on things mundane. I am not sure, however, but that there was a good deal of truth in his answer to the priest who remarked in his hearing that "God had made man in his own image." "Ay," said Fontenelle, "and man has returned the compliment."

Only, the strange thing is that the very same answer has been put into the mouth of Heine.

A certain Bishop of Quebec, in the days when Canada was French, strayed into the forests, and disappeared. A party sent in search of him fell in with a company of Indians, the picturesque Redskins idealised by Fenimore Cooper, and enquired of them if they knew the missing prelate. "Knew him!" said one of them; "I helped to

eat him!" Certainly, Intimacy could hardly be carried further! But I may point out that similar jests are of frequent occurrence in both French and English jest-books, and perhaps were not wholly unknown to Sydney Smith when he talked of "cold boiled missionary on the side-board."

The humorist Santeuil sometimes returned to his monastery at a much later—or earlier—hour than became a man in his position. One night, when he presented himself at the gate of Saint-Victor after eleven, the porter refused to open it, having, he said, been strictly forbidden to do so. After repeated solicitations and as many declinations, our poet slipped a half-louis under the gate, and bolt and bar were immediately withdrawn. As soon as he was inside, he pretended that he had left a book on the stone seat where he had kept vigil. The porter obligingly stepped out for it, and Santeuil immediately closed the gate upon him. Master Peter, who was only half-dressed, knocked lustily at the door. "I dare not open it," replied Santeuil. "Monsieur le Prieur has forbidden me." "Ah, Monsieur de Santeuil, I opened it for you." "Yes, and I will let you in on the same terms." The porter returned the half-louis and was admitted.

This incident has been Anglicised by George Colman, and put into verse. Santeuil becomes an undergraduate, and the locale is transferred to one of the colleges at Cambridge.

La Mothe d'Orléans, Bishop of Amiens, was in attendance, with several other prelates, on Madame Louise de la Vallière, some time after that Princess had made her vows. The prelate stood apart, and seemed to take no interest in the airy conversation that fluttered round her. At last Madame Louise asked him the subject of his reverie.

"Ah, madame, I was dreaming that I was in Paradise, and that some one having knocked at the gate, Saint Peter asked who it was. 'A Carmelite,' was the reply. 'Let her enter.' A few moments, and there was another knock; the same enquiry, the same reply. There came a third rapping. 'Who is that?' 'A Carmelite.' 'Eh? Good Heavens! Nobody comes here but Carmelites.' After awhile there was a fourth summons at the gate. 'Is that another Carmelite?' 'No, your Saintship, 'tis a Bishop.' 'Ah, ah,' cried Saint Peter, 'he is welcome, for 'tis centuries since a Bishop passed this way.'"

One seems to get a hint of this poignant sarcasm in Byron's "Vision of Judgement":

"And who is George the Third?" replied the Apostle:
"What George? What Third?" "The King of England," said
The Angel. "Well, he won't find Kings to jostle Him on his way."

During the demolitions and excavations which took place at Belleville, near Paris, about the middle of the last century, the workmen came upon a stone, engraved with rude characters, which attracted much attention among antiquaries and archaeologists, and was eventually thought worthy of being examined by the members of the Academy of Inscriptions and the Belles Lettres. After careful examination they made out the following letters, in the order given; but to what language they belonged, or what was their meaning, not the most learned pundit could conjecture.

I	C
I	
L	
E	
C	H
E	M
I	
D	E
S	A
N	E
S	S

The most competent authorities were consulted, but in vain. At length the beadle of Montmartre, happening to hear of the stone and the difficulty under which the Academicians laboured, asked permission to see it, and immediately solved the problem. The letters, he explained, belonged to a very simple bit of information: "Ici le chemin des ânes"—this is the donkeys' path. Formerly some plaster quarries were worked at Belleville, and the stone had been set up as a guide-post to show the nearest way to the loading-place.

I find this quip upon antiquarian credulity in the "Mémoires de Bachamont," 1779.

Now everybody knows the similar satire in "The Antiquary," when Monk barns' supposed discovery of a Roman Praetorium is so rudely upset by Edie Ochiltree. Sir Walter Scott refers to a story of "Keep on this Syde," in the "Town and Country Magazine" for 1771, but in his notes mentions that the incident of the Praetorium actually happened to an antiquary of great learning and acuteness, Sir John Clark, of Penicuik, one of the Commissioners for the Treaty of Union between England and Scotland. It would therefore appear that the jest is of much earlier origin than the French "Mémoires."

Turenne, one day, observing that at each volley from a certain battery some of his soldiers ducked their heads, but drew themselves up again immediately, lest they should be reprimanded, exclaimed : " Mes enfans, there is no harm in what you do ; such visitors well deserve an obeisance." This reminds one of the French officer's politeness when he saw a bomb approaching. Leaping aside as it approached, he took off his hat, and bowing low, remarked : " I never dispute precedence with gentlemen of your family."

A certain French poet, who had written verses in honour of Napoleon, after the Restoration poetised in praise of the Bourbons. Having presented his elegantly written couplets to Louis the Eighteenth, the King remarked :

" They are very fine ; but I think those were much finer which you dedicated to my predecessor."

" Your Majesty is right," replied the poet, unabashed ; " but everybody knows that poets succeed much better in fiction than in reality."

It is certainly a curious coincidence, to say the least of it, that exactly the same reply under the same circumstances should have been made by Edmund Waller to Charles the Second. " When Waller," says Mr. Gosse, " presented the fourth of his panegyrics to Charles the Second, the King made the awkward remark that he thought it much inferior to his panegyric on Cromwell. This double thrust, attacking his loyalty and his poetry at once, would have silenced most men ; but Waller extricated himself from the trying position with habitual coolness. ' Sir ! ' he replied, ' we poets never succeed so well in writing truth as fiction.' "

A curé was examining the children of his parish in their catechism. The first question in the Heidelberg catechism runs as follows : " What is thy only consolation in life and death ? " The young girl to whom it fell began to laugh and blush, and declined to reply. The priest insisted. " Well," she said at last, " if I must tell you, it's the young shoemaker in the Rue des Agneaux."

This not very bright joke occurs in the " Mémoires de la Princesse Palatine." Recently I saw it going the rounds as a brand-new joke, adapted to the American market.

Henri Quatre was a lover of " les bons mots " as well as of " les bonnes filles." Halting at a village one day to get

some dinner, he gave orders that whoever was reputed to be the greatest wit should be brought to amuse him during his repast. On the appearance of the rustic prodigy, he commanded him to sit down on the other side of the table.

" What is your name ? " enquired the King.

" Sire, my name is Gaillard."

" Hah, and what is the difference between Gaillard and paillard — a lewd fellow ? "

" Sire," was the unexpected reply, " there is only the table between them."

" Ventre-saint-gris ! " exclaimed Henry, laughing, " he has me there. I never expected to find so much wit in so little a village."

There is a home-made story to the effect that a certain eccentric Archbishop asking a young priest, who was among his guests, what was the difference between a goose and a curate, received the same stinging reply.

An old joke preserved by Tallemant exists in several English versions. This is the way in which Tallemant puts it. Some deputies from the provinces having been admitted to an interview with Cardinal Richelieu, Bautru thought to display his wit at the expense of the elder among them. " Sir, pardon me for interrupting you, but what was the price of asses in your country when you left ? " " Those of your size and figure," rejoined the deputy, " fetched ten crowns." It is surprising that men supposed to be practised wits should expose themselves to such easy retorts.

To quote again from the " Mémoires de Bachaumont," ed. 1777. The grand almoner, Roche-Aymon, in his imbecile old age, was complaining of his gout to Dr. Bouvart, and exclaimed that he suffered like one of the damned. " What, already ? " — " Quoi, déjà ? " — rejoined the malicious physician.

Now Sydney Smith says : " Nobody's wit was of so high an order as Talleyrand's, or has so well stood the test of time. You remember when his friend Montrond was taken ill, and exclaimed, ' Mon ami, je sens les tourmens de l'enfer.' ' Quoi, déjà ? ' was his reply." But the fact seems to be that Talleyrand simply retorted this bit of malignity as a quotation.

Moore records an anecdote told by Croker as one of the happiest things he had ever heard. Fénelon, who had teased Richelieu without success for subscriptions

to various charities, was telling him one day that he had just seen his picture. "And did you ask it for a subscription?" sneered Richelieu. "No; I saw there was no chance; it was so like you." But is not a similar jest connected with Garrick?

Madame Fanny de Beauharnais, endeavouring to acquire a reputation both as poetess and beauty, provoked from Lebrun a bitter epigram:

La belle Eglé, dit-on, a deux petits travers :
Elle fait son visage et ne fait pas ses vers.

This reappears in Byron's poem :

Ægle, beauty and poet, has two little crimes :
She makes her own face, and does not make her rhymes.

Martial has an epigram : "Sint Mae[n]ates, non deerunt, Flacce, Marones"—Mæcenases would not be wanting, O Flaccus, if there were Virgils. Now a French chronicler relates that when King John of France had come to Paris, and called his Parliament together, he complained "in a pitiful tone" of his misfortunes and the calamities of his realm. Among the rest he lamented that he could find no more Rolands or Gawains. Whereupon one of his peers, who had been famous for his valour in his youth, and was incensed at the King's slothfulness, replied, There would be no want of Rolands if there were Charlemains. As the French noble could not have read Martial, we may suppose either that the Latin poet's witty saying had been handed down as a proverb, or that the coincidence was purely accidental, which is probably the case.

Here is the original, from the "Ménagiane," of an old joke—a perfect "chestnut." At the last sermon of a mission in a rural district, everybody wept, except one peasant. "And why do you not weep?" he was asked. "Oh, I don't belong to this parish!"

We all remember Puff's ingenious excuse for plagiarism in "The Critic." "Haven't I heard that line before?" enquires Snoot. "Yes," says Dangle, "I think there's something like it in 'Othello.'" "Gad," exclaims Puff, "now you put me in mind on't, I believe there is—but that's of no consequence; all that can be said is, that two people happened to hit upon the same thought—and Shakespeare made use of it first, that's all."

I am reminded of Sheridan's witty saying by an epigram of the Chevalier d'Aceilly, dating from the seventeenth century. "Do I say anything tolerably good? Antiquity, in pure imagination, pretends to have said

it before me. She is a jocose damsel! Why didn't she come after me? Then I should have said my good things first."

I subjoin the French :

Dis-je quelque chose assez belle ?
L'antiquité tout en cervelle
Prétend l'avoir dite avant moi.
C'est une plaisante donzelle !
Que ne venait-elle après moi?
J'aurais dit la chose avant elle.

In recommending a candidate for employment, the man's friend remarked, "Everybody must live." "Je n'en vois pas la nécessité," replied Talleyrand.

But this answer had already been made by Monsieur d'Argenson to the Abbé Desfontaines, and put into verse by Piron long before Talleyrand's time. It has also been given as the reply of a French Judge to a thief, who pleaded against being sentenced to death.

It has been the illusion of many of us that "the King is no subject" was a good home-made conundrum; but I read that when Louis the Fifteenth asked the witty Monsieur de Bièvre to invent a riddle, the latter said: "On what subject, sir?" "N'importe;" on me, if you will." "Mais votre Majesté n'est pas un sujet!"

Another of our favourite facetiae must be resigned to the land of bons-mots and calembours. The Comte de Clermont d'Amboise, in full dress, and blazing with orders, was waiting for some one to admit him into the stalls of the Théâtre des Français. Seeing a wit of the day, one Martin, surnamed the Cynic, the Duke—who did not know him personally—hastened towards him. "Are you the boxer, mon cher?" "No; are you?"

The "Genesis of Jokes" may be recommended to the literary archaeologist as a subject which has not yet received the attention it deserves.

THE GREY BOY.

A SHORT SERIAL STORY.

CHAPTER IV.

THE groom and the butler—a negro—both sprang to her assistance. She had struck her temple rather severely against the side of the door. The butler, pompous but kindly, was full of concern.

"Missie hab tolerable bad tumble," he said. "Here is Mrs. Maria; she look after you. What a night, to be suar!" turning away to shut the heavy oaken door, in which he was assisted by the groom.

An elderly woman, also of negro extraction, came hurrying forward from the back of the hall. If her manner were less dignified, she spoke better English than the butler, and after a first astonished glance into the pale young face, she warmed into motherly fussiness which went straight to the heart of the tired, lonely girl.

"How is Mrs. Anson?" asked the butler in a low voice, as she turned away for a moment to give some order about Leila's luggage. "Mr. Hesketh—he come home in a debil of a bad temper. He just mad wid indignation."

"She's better," the woman answered hastily, in the same lowered voice. "But it has been a bad attack this time. Will you please follow me, miss?" aloud to Leila, who, standing listlessly by, had just caught a few words.

She led the way to the oak staircase, at the farther end of the hall. The hall was very handsome, warm, and bright, with two great fires, and several lamps. The brilliance of the illumination contrasted vividly with the darkness outside. Indeed, brightness and warmth pervaded the whole house, giving a general sense of comfort and luxury to Leila as she followed her guide through what seemed a maze of corridors and winding passages, to the suite of rooms set aside for the use of herself and her pupil. By the time she reached them, troublesome doubts and the sense of dreariness and loneliness were fast fading.

An hour later, almost everything else was forgotten in a keen appreciation of the present comfort of her position. A dainty meal in a pretty school-room, waited on by the motherly half-caste, Maria; then a restful lounge over the fire of the beautifully furnished sitting-room set apart for her own special use, so artistic and luxurios in its fittings and hangings, that she felt more like a princess than a lonely stranger in an unknown family; and when at last she retired to her equally cosy bedroom, she felt that her lines had indeed fallen in pleasant places. So far she had seen none of the family, with the exception of Mr. Hesketh Anson, who, she gathered from Maria, was Mr. Anson's brother. He lived at Moorlands, and acted as his brother's agent. Mrs. Anson was too unwell to see her that day, but she had given Maria instructions to see that Miss Mallet had everything that she needed. Her pupil, too, had been confined to her room for the last day or two with a feverish cold, but would probably be well

enough to come into the school-room on the morrow.

Maria, who had most faithfully carried out her mistress's instructions, came again to her bedroom, the last thing at night, to see that she was comfortable, and insisted, in spite of Leila's economical scruples—a fire in her bedroom having hitherto been an unheard-of luxury—in making up one to last through the night.

"You will need it before the morning," she said, with a shiver. "It is the worst fall of snow I've seen in my life—and the wind! Hark at it!" Then as a thought seemed to strike her, "You are sure, miss," looking curiously at the girl, "you aren't afraid—Lord a mercy! you don't look much more than a child yourself," a troubled note in her voice.

Leila laughingly disclaimed any such fears; and the woman, casting another curious, half-reluctant glance back at her, left the room.

Tired out, Leila had scarcely laid her head on the pillows before she was asleep. It was between two and three in the morning when she started suddenly out of a deep sleep.

There was a lull in the wind.

The room was dark, except for a dim glimmer at the farther end, where a red glow still burned at the heart of the dying fire. She did not know what had roused her. But she sat up frightened, and wide awake, to listen.

There was a longer pause than usual between the gusts of wind, and for the moment everything was intensely still. She could hear the mice scampering behind the wainscoting; the faint crackling sound of the burned-out embers in the grate; a creak from the basket-chair by the fireside; and with these other noises, familiar to the night, was another, less easy to recognise, but still distinct, in that almost supernatural stillness that reigns between the gusts of a raging wind, or the deafening crashes of a thunderstorm. It came from the door. It sounded most like the passing of a human hand across the woodwork; like the stealthy fumbling of crawling fingers, searching for the bolt.

She remembered suddenly, with a feeling of relief and thankfulness which sent the chilled blood surging with suffocating swiftness through her veins, that she had locked the door before going to bed. Then the wind swooped down once more on the house, and in the first second of its fury she seemed to catch a sound like a far-off

choked cry of rage and agony, lost instantly in the roar of the raging wind.

She sat up in bed, straining her ears to listen, till the gust once more died away. Then she hastily lit her candle, and, stealing out of bed, stirred up the fire, which broke after a moment into a blaze, giving her a vague sense of cheery companionship. Battling with the nervous fancies and fears that beset her, she, with a light, went over to the door, where she stood listening for a few seconds for any sound on the other side. Then, with a violent effort conquering her cowardice, she cautiously opened the door and looked into the adjoining apartment, which was her sitting-room. It was, as she with much unnecessary energy had told herself it would be, empty. Its door, leading in its turn into the passage, was shut. The eerie noises had, after all, only been conjured up by her excited fancy. She flashed the candle, gaining courage, into all its corners, and was just turning back into her room, when something on the floor close to the threshold of the door attracted her attention. She bent swiftly to look. It was a glove—a man's driving-glove. It was heavy, and saturated with moisture, as if the wearer of it had but just come in from the raging snowstorm outside. As she stood, pale and bewildered, staring at it, the light of her candle falling full on it, she saw that it lacked a button.

CHAPTER V.

"I DO think that you are just the loveliest governess I've ever had!"

The sincere enthusiasm of the speech, perhaps, atoned for the lack of accuracy in the statement. Leila knew that not by the most liberal canons of art could she claim any pretensions to being a beauty. She laughed, looking, with the most intense appreciation of the child's own loveliness, at her little pupil.

Maria had brought her into the schoolroom about eleven o'clock that morning. The child was about ten. She still looked delicate from her indisposition, but Leila thought her one of the most beautiful children she had ever seen. There was something uncommon and foreign-looking about her, and Maria, who was plainly devoted to the family, told Leila with great pride that Mrs. Anson was half Spanish, and the most beautiful woman in the county.

Dolores Anson was sitting on the arm of the big chair by the school-room fire, watching Leila put a tuck in her doll's last new frock. Her next statement, perhaps, rather qualified the first.

"You see," with a certain old-fashioned air which touched her at times, "all the others have been so ugly—and old, too. You haven't forgotten the time yet, have you, when you used to play with dolls?" with a sudden anxious wistfulness.

"No," promptly. "I still have my doll. It is put away carefully in a drawer at home. And do you know—"

She checked herself abruptly as she remembered her position as instructor of youth, and questioned the wisdom of betraying the fact that she had even taken a look at it, to see that it was all right, before leaving home.

"Oh, I do wish you had brought it with you! We could have had such lovely times together! Couldn't we send Washington for it? Oh, yes, we will!"

"He will have to go to the Land's End nearly for it," Leila said, with a laugh. "Who is Washington?"

"He's our butler. Do you come from very far?" in an anxious tone.

"Yes, from miles away, and I couldn't tell you how many miles there are between my doll and me!" with an odd note of half-sad, half-amused regret. "But I will help you look after yours. That will be better."

"Yes—if you only stay," with a sudden sorrowful doubt. "But you will be going away like all the rest. I've had hundreds of governesses, I think," with melancholy weariness.

Leila looked up quickly.

"Oh, none of them ever stay here long," answering the look. "They mostly go as soon as they get here. None of the last stayed more than a week," more cheerfully, as if there had been some redeeming feature in the speediness of their departure. "Father and I weren't sorry. They were all so prim and ugly. But mother gets so tired of always changing, and it's all the same; no one ever stays long here, servants or anything. We do everything we can to make the governesses happy," with an air of dignity. "Mother had the sitting and bedroom all done up new for the last one, and she only stayed three days. She was a German. We've tried Germans, and Italians, and Russians, and everything. But I don't think they seem to like us. They all go, some crying, some angry,

and one—I heard her; Uncle Hesketh tried to keep her quiet, but she would scream so, that I heard everything—and she stamped her foot, and said she would send the policemen and put us all in prison, and wanted to see father and mother, but Uncle Hesketh would not let her."

"Why not?" involuntarily thinking of that young man with a flush of her own cheek. She trusted that any communication she should hold with the family would not have to be carried out through him.

"Oh! He always does everything. Mother gets frightened, and won't see them, and father is not strong enough. He has some illness that makes him very funny and bad, sometimes," with tender gravity. "He is too bad sometimes for me to see him, and so Uncle Hesketh does most things like that. How lovely your hair is, Miss Mallet," nestling her cheek with childish admiration against the pretty head of her new governess, "only you don't do it nicely."

That young lady sat for a second, dismayed. The child's arms suddenly slipped round her neck.

"Don't go away like the others," she pleaded. "It is so dull here sometimes. I have no little boys or girls to play with, and there are lots of children about here. I look at them in church, and do so wish they would come and have tea with me; but they never do, and I don't know any of them. Sometimes I go to have tea with Mrs. Lucas at the Vicarage, but not often, and she hasn't any children of her own, and she doesn't ask me when she has a party."

Leila's arm slipped with a sudden piti-fulness round the child's waist, but the gravity in her eyes deepened.

"It won't be so dull now you are here," and the child nestled closer into the caressing embrace. "You look so different to all the other horrid prim things we've had lately. And you'll stay; oh, you'll have to! Just look at the snow!" And she sprang off the arm of the chair and ran to the window to look out.

Leila rose, too, and followed her. Before her stretched a scene of the most complete winter desolation. The house, enclosed in extensive grounds, stood on the side of one of those bare, bleak hills of Derbyshire which alternate in such stern contrast with its lovely valleys. The grounds were fairly well wooded, considering the exposed situation, the thick belt of old firs enclosing them helping to shield the less sturdy trees from the full force of the wind as

it swept round the hillside. From the school-room window not another house could be seen. The snow, which had been falling all night, had increased as the wind lulled towards the morning, and was now falling in a thick sheet of whirling snow-flakes from the leaden sky overhead. As far as the eye could reach there was one unbroken sweep of snow. Bleak hills, trees, garden paths, and distant country roads, lay white beneath it; while here and there, where the wind had raged in unchecked fury, the snow had been driven into wreaths and drifts, deep enough to make passage not only difficult but dangerous.

"Uncle Hesketh says it will probably snow for the next two days, and if it does, we shan't get out for a week. You don't know what it is like here in the winter, Miss Mallet. Do look! Isn't it lovely when the wind swoops down like that and sends the snowflakes whirling up in the air again? I always think they must be having such fun. And I do so want to go out and join them!" pressing her face, with a strange, eager passion in her eyes, closer to the window-pane. "And they won't let me. It's horrid! I don't wonder that the Grey Boy always comes—"

She stopped, growing red and confused, glancing with a queer, anxious look into Leila's face.

The child's manner, perhaps, made the allusion more noticeable.

"Who is the Grey Boy?" she asked. Dolores brushed away the mist her warm breath had left on the window.

"They said I wasn't to tell you about him," she said, with a touch of sulkiness, after a pause. "But I don't see that it matters. If we don't tell them they find it out. I believe it is that that frightens them and sends them away. He's a ghost that haunts this house. I feel a little frightened myself sometimes," drawing closer to Leila, "though he won't hurt me. For I met him once down there." She pointed through the window, down to a thick shrubbery that skirted one side of a small lawn, which with only a bed between reached almost to the walls of the house. "There is a pathway through the shrubbery, leading to the bowling-green. It was getting dark. It was winter-time, and it had been snowing all the afternoon, and I couldn't stay indoors any longer. Miss Grove, that was my governess then, had gone to lie down with a headache, and I was all alone. So I slipped out just to see the snow better, and when I reached

[December 2, 1893.]

the path I saw the Grey Boy coming down it, through the snow; and he passed me quite close in the dusk. I could see his face—it was quite white—and his eyes frightened me, I couldn't move. And then he put out his hand and touched mine, and it was as white and cold as snow!" She passed one hand over the other as if she could still feel the icy touch. "And I didn't scream," with a half-fearful pride, "and then he disappeared, and he hadn't hurt me a bit. But mother, and father, and uncle, were so angry that Miss Grove was sent away next day for letting me go out in the snow."

"But that's just what I say!" going on again petulantly. "They needn't be so silly and scared; he didn't hurt me. He is mostly seen when the snow is on the ground. I believe," with mysterious awe, warming up into complete forgetfulness of the injunction laid on her, not to mention the subject to her new governess, "that he was walking last night. It is just the sort of night that he always comes, and mother was bad yesterday, and isn't up yet. She is always ill when he is seen. And father was very bad, too. I heard Uncle Hesketh and Washington helping him to bed ever so late last night, and he was making such queer noises. But when I spoke to Maria about it this morning, she was very cross. She always is when I speak about the Grey Boy, and says it is

all nonsense. But it isn't nonsense. He comes, I know, and that's partly why we have mostly black servants—that and because mother is used to them. They aren't frightened of him like the silly English ones, who are always screaming and thinking he's after them to kill them; and then they give notice and go. But mother, and father, and uncle, too, are very angry if it is talked about."

Leila, feeling, too, that it was an unsuitable subject, changed the conversation.

She and Dolores spent the day together, in the suite of apartments set apart for their use. Besides her own two rooms, there was the school-room, and also a play-room for the child. The passage leading to it was shut off from the rest of the left wing of the house, in which it was situated, by a heavy swing-door. She and Dolores did no lessons that day, and she had several opportunities of discovering the character of the child she had to teach. She did not see any of the other members of the family till nearly dinner-time.

Dolores, still treated as an invalid, had, after considerable opposition on her part, been taken off by Maria, who was her special attendant, to her bedroom, which opened off that of her mother's, in the centre of the house.

It was about half-past seven, when Leila, sitting alone in her own room, saw the door open, and Mrs. Anson enter.

NOTICE.

NOW READY,

"THE LAST WITNESS."

A Complete Story,

BY
MARY ANGELA DICKENS and MARGARET MOULE,
Joint Authors of "TAKEN ON TRUST,"

BEING

THE EXTRA CHRISTMAS NUMBER

OF
ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

Of all Booksellers and at the Railway Bookstalls.

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 163, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND is reserved by the Authors.

HOME NOTES.

HOME NOTES

AND

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

PAINTING ON LINEN.—In transparent painting on linen, select a fine and good material, stretch, and lash on a wooden frame. Size the linen with gilders' size diluted in warm water, and use warm. When dry, re-stretch and re-size, and leave it to dry again, once more stretching the material. Try the oil-colours upon it, and if they do not sink in, commence your painting. But if they do, re-size, let it dry, and then rub the surface with pumice-stone till smooth, and re-stretch. The design must be traced with charcoal; and when perfect, go over the outlines with a quill pen dipped in Indian ink. You may also stencil patterns with stencil plates. Mix the oil-colours to be used with japanners' gold-size, working them up well with a palette knife. Then mix the colours in separate saucers, thinning some of them with turpentine to make them lighter in tone, mixing a great variety of colours before beginning to paint. Use pieces of sponge instead of brushes to apply the paint to the fine linen, and take out lights when the colours are nearly dry with a palette knife. You should use hog's-hair brushes for foreground effects, and produce depths of colour by putting on more and more of it; and work at night with gas, or a strong light, behind the linen; and make all the white tints and high lights by leaving those parts unpainted.

ENQUIRING MIND.—The object with which the great pyramids of Egypt were built is a much-vexed question. Very many conjectures have been made, but as yet no history or traditions have been handed down to us to clear up the mystery. The late Professor Proctor suggests that they were erected by different kings for the purpose of astronomical observations, and this more especially with a view to predictions having personal reference to their future life, and to discover those epochs that might appear dangerous or propitious to their reigns. In fact, the science of astrology is the keynote, as it were, to the theory he propounded. How the enormous blocks of stone were raised one above another is likewise an unsolved mystery. Experts say that with all our modern appliances and experience to aid us we could not now build the Great Pyramid at a less cost than thirty millions of money.

A PRUDENT SERVANT.—A young Austrian count, imprudently fond of the gaming-table, by a run of luck at Baden found himself a winner of thirty thousand florins, carried the money away with him, and deposited it carefully in his desk, fully intending to recommence operations next morning with renewed vigour. To his unspeakable dismay, however, the precious roll of notes had in the course of the night unaccountably disappeared, and with it his servant, an old retainer of the family, of whose honesty he had hitherto never entertained the slightest doubt. Ten days later, while still bewailing his loss, the absentee quietly entered the room as if nothing had happened, and handed a folded paper to his master. "Where have you been?" angrily exclaimed the young man. "To Vienna," coolly replied Fritz. "And my thirty thousand florins, where are they?" "Perfectly safe. I felt sure you would lose them again, so I took them to your banker's, and the paper you have in your hand is his receipt for the money."

YORKSHIRE TEA CAKE.—Cream half an ounce of German yeast with a teaspoonful of castor sugar; melt an ounce of dripping in a saucepan, and pour a teacupful of milk on it, make it lukewarm, then add it to the yeast and sugar. Place three-quarters of a pound of flour in a basin and strain the liquid on to it, add one well-beaten egg, and mix all thoroughly. Turn the dough on to a floured board, knead it, and cut it into round cakes with the top of a cake tin, grease the tins and put the cakes in them, stand them near the fire for an hour till they have risen, then bake them for a quarter of an hour. These cakes must be allowed to cool, they can then be toasted, buttered, and served hot in a muffineer.

MAUD.—You do not say what amount you are prepared to spend on the furnishing of your drawing-room. With wood-work of pitch pine I should have a floral paper, and panel the doors with Japanese paper in cream and gold. Carpet with drab ground and various colours blended in conventional design; curtains, either tapestry or chenille; couch, two easy-chairs, and three or four others covered in tapestry; a draped wicker one; bookshelves in bamboo to go over the cupboard; stand for music, also in Japanese bamboo; small table with flaps; octagon ditto; stand for ornaments to fix in corner of the room, and cabinet, both in the same style of furniture. It is by no means expensive, and looks exceedingly nice and bright.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

VITAL MECHANISM.—It has been assumed by those competent to form an opinion that there are twenty-five thousand muscles in a silkworm. There are eight thousand in the trunk of an elephant, and in most of the serpents perhaps more than a million. Through the instrumentality of those organs the flexibility of the boa-constrictor depends. By an act of will—that is, instantly charging the muscles with an extra force—the great python of Africa crushes a living lion into a shapeless mass for swallowing. Every bone is ground into fragments, so that no opposing obstacles, in the form of splinters, or projecting points, can injure the throat on the way to the snake's immensely large elastic stomach. Neither art nor science has yet discovered a method for generating such power by, apparently, such a simple device.

ARMISTON.—The sobriquet of the Duke of Wellington was applied to him without any reference to his character and firmness of purpose, although the latter was a leading characteristic of his. It originated in the naming of an iron steamboat after him, which plied between Liverpool and Dublin, and was called "The Duke of Wellington," and distinguished from him as "The Iron Duke." Subsequently the name was applied, in a jocular way, to the Duke himself. The origin of the name "Dragoon" is traced to the fact that the oldest regiment of them (the "Scots Greys," raised 1681), were called after a short musket which they carried, decorated with the head of a dragon on the muzzle, out of the mouth of which the fire spouted, as it was supposed to do out of that of the monster so named.

CHEF—To prepare the mutton cutlets in the way you mention, garlic must be used; chop three or four cloves of garlic very fine, with a little parsley, mix with breadcrumbs seasoned with salt and pepper. Cut some rather large slices from a leg of mutton, and shape them like small cutlets, then fix a small piece of macaroni at each end to form the bone (when the cutlets are finished a small frill of paper would go round each stick). Dip each cutlet in melted butter, then cover it with breadcrumbs, etc. When that is done fry them in butter in a sauté pan, then dish them and put them aside. Pour a large breakfast-cupful of broth into the sauté pan with the gravy, and let it warm up, then strain it through a sieve, pouring back the clear gravy into the sauté pan; put the cutlets back into this gravy, add to it a little sugar, salt, and pepper. Let this simmer slowly for a few minutes.

TO KATE.—Yes, I have a prescription for almond paste, but I do not often give it, for I find people do not care for the trouble of making it. I advise your doing so, for you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have a pure and safe preparation for the skin. Pound a quarter of a pound of sweet almonds in a mortar, adding gradually the white of an egg to moisten them. When the almonds are reduced to a pulp, add sufficient rose water and rectified spirit in equal proportions to make a paste. Press this into covered pots, and paste paper over so that the air cannot get to it, until required for use.

SCOTCH COLLOPS and mince are two very different things, the former being decidedly superior in every way. For it you require about one pound of lean steak free from skin and fat. Mince it carefully. Dredge a little flour over it, and season with pepper and salt. Melt about an ounce of butter or dripping in a saucepan. Then add the mince, stirring it constantly for about ten minutes. Then pour over it about a gill or rather less of boiling stock, stir it well, and, if necessary, dredge in a little more flour. Fry some three-cornered pieces of bread, arrange them round the dish, and pour the collops into the centre. Scatter a little chopped parsley over, and serve.

DRIED VEGETABLES.—With the approach of winter our supply of fresh vegetables begins to diminish very perceptibly. This obliges us to use the various dried vegetables which are sold. Among the most useful are peas, beans, and lentils. These are very nourishing, and contain more nitrogenous matter than any other kind of vegetable. All dried vegetables should be soaked in cold water for some hours before boiling, and they also require long cooking to make them soft and digestible. These three, peas, beans, and lentils, take the place of meat to vegetarians; they are nourishing, and make bone and muscle.

LONDON TOFFEE—Place in a chinalined saucepan half a pound of treacle, half a pound of Demerara sugar, and four ounces of butter, which should be broken into small pieces. Place the saucepan on a clear fire, and stir slowly, till all the ingredients are well mixed. After this, boil slowly for half an hour, but do not stir often, or the sugar will granulate, and your chance of making toffee will be gone. The juice of half a lemon is a nice flavouring. When nearly done, test the toffee by dropping a little into cold water, and if it crisps pour into a buttered tin.

HOME NOTES.

EXTRAORDINARY SUCCESS IN THE TREATMENT OF OBESITY.—"Our corpulent readers will be glad to learn how to positively lose two stone in about a month with the greatest possible benefit to health, strength, and muscle, by a comparatively new system. It is a singular paradox that the patient, returning quickly to a healthy stage, with increased activity of brain, digestive, and other organs, naturally requires more food than hitherto; yet, notwithstanding this, he absolutely loses in weight 1 to 2 lb. daily, as the weighing-machine will prove. Thus there is no suggestion of starvation. It is an absolute success, and the author, who has devoted years of study to the subject, absolutely guarantees a noticeable reduction within twenty-four hours of commencing the treatment. This is different with other diseases, for the patient, in some cases, may go for weeks without being able to test whether the physician has rightly treated him, and may have derived no real or apparent improvement in health. Here, we repeat, the author guarantees it in twenty-four hours, the scale to be the unerring judge. The treatment aims at the actual root of the disease, so that superfluous fat does not return when discontinuing the treatment. It is perfectly harmless. We advise our readers to call the attention of stout friends to this, because, sincerely, we think they ought to know. For their information we may say that, on sending cost of postage (sixpence) a reprint of Press notices from some hundreds of medical and other journals—British and foreign—and other interesting particulars, including the 'recipe,' can be had from a Mr. F. C. Russell, Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C."—"Belfast News Letter."

A POSITIVE CURE FOR CORPULENCE.—"Any remedy that can be suggested as a cure or alleviation for stoutness will be heartily welcomed. We have recently received a well-written book, the author of which seems to know what he is talking about. It is entitled 'Corpulency, and the Cure,' and is a cheap issue (only sixpence), published by Mr. F. Russell, of Woburn House, Store St., Bedford Square, London. Our space will not do justice to this book: send for it yourself. It appears that Mr. Russell has submitted all kinds of proofs to the English press. The editor of the 'Tablet,' the Catholic organ, writes: 'Mr. Russell does not give us the slightest loophole for a doubt as to the value of his cure; for in the most straightforward and

matter-of-fact manner he submitted some hundreds of original and unsolicited testimonial letters for our perusal, and offered us plenty more, if required. To assist him to make this remedy known, we think we cannot do better than publish quotations from some of the letters submitted. The first one, a Marchioness, writes from Madrid: 'My son, Count —, has reduced his weight in twenty-two days 16 kilos.—i.e., 34 lb.' Another writes: 'So far (six weeks from commencement of following your system) I have lost fully two stone in weight.' The next (a lady) writes: 'I am just half the size.' A fourth: 'I find it is successful in my case. I have lost 8 lb. in weight since I commenced (two weeks).' Another writes: 'A reduction of 18 lb. in a month is a great success.' A lady from Bournemouth writes: 'I feel much better, have less difficulty in breathing, and can walk about.' Again a lady says: 'It reduced me considerably, not only in the body, but all over.' The author is very positive. He says: 'Step on a weighing-machine on Monday morning and again on Tuesday, and I can guarantee that you have lost 2 lb. in weight without the slightest harm, and vast improvement in health through ridding the system of unhealthy accumulations.'—"Cork Herald," 27th August, 1892.

GOOD NEWS FOR STOUT PEOPLE.—It does not follow that a person need to be the size of Sir John Falstaff to show that he is unhealthily fat. According to a person's height so should his weight correspond, and this standard has been prepared by Mr. F. C. Russell, of Woburn House, Store St., Bedford Square, London, W.C., so that any one can see at a glance whether or no he is too stout. People in the past have been wont to regard fatness as constitutional, and something to be laughed at rather than to be prescribed for seriously; but this is evidently an error, as persons whose mode of life has caused a certain excess of flesh require treating for the cause of that excess, not by merely stopping further increase, but by removing the cause itself. It is marvellous how this "Pasteur" and "Koch" of English discoverers can actually reduce as much as 14 lb. in seven days with a simple herbal remedy. His book only costs sixpence, and he is quite willing to afford all information to those sending as above. It is really well worth reading."—"Forget-Me-Not," November 19th, 1892.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

MARKING LINEN.—The daughter of the late John Bond is justly celebrated for the marking ink which is manufactured in her name. It is most essential to get a good and well-known ink for marking linen, or probably all the trouble taken will be wasted, under the rigid course of washing adopted by laundresses. By sending for a bottle of this ink you will be compensated in two ways: Firstly, by getting the correct thing; and secondly, by a coupon which entitles the purchaser to their monogram or name rubber stamp. These stamps will last a lifetime, and are a marvel of cheapness and durability. The trade mark of this ink is "Crystal Palace," so do not get any other.

TOWN HOUSE.—John Noble is sending out a very large assortment of patterns of new season's goods. You could not possibly choose so well at a shop as from these patterns. The serges are really beautiful, and certain to wear well. It appears almost incredible, yet it is perfectly true, that you can buy a lady's serge costume for ten shillings and sixpence, made from the John Noble cheviot serge, trimmed black russia braid, and ready for immediate wear. They are a marvel of cheapness and excellence. Patterns on application free of charge will be sent by return of post by John Noble, 11, Piccadilly, Manchester.

HOUSEKEEPER.—Unfermented bread is made with Borwick's baking powder, and is not only perfectly wholesome, but by many persons found to be more digestible than fermented bread. The great secret of success in making unfermented bread lies in the expeditious mixing of the flour with the liquid, and in putting it into the oven the moment this is done. An important point is the thorough incorporation of the baking powder with the flour, as if this is not done little yellow spots appear in the bread, frequently giving rise to needless apprehension of some unwholesome ingredients. Care should be taken to ascertain that the oven is at a proper heat before mixing the bread; the baking sheet should be floured and ready to hand, and not an instant lost in putting the loaves into the oven. Only a small quantity of this bread should be mixed at one time. Two pounds are enough for one operation, and should be divided into three or four loaves. Half an hour will bake them. Two teaspoonfuls of Borwick's baking powder and half a pint of water are the proportions for a pound of flour of the finest quality; a little less liquid is required for second qualities.

LAMENESS.—It is now possible for those persons who are afflicted with a shortened limb to do away with the conventional cork boot or the unsightly iron attachment, and possess an extension which will enable them to stand erect, wear ordinary shoes or slippers, and present the appearance of having two perfect feet. The inventor is Mr. O'Connor, whose right leg is six inches shorter than the left, and who has succeeded in producing an extension which removes all appearance of deformity, and enables the wearer to walk long distances comfortably and naturally. The arrangement is such that the foot of the short leg fits comfortably into the appliance, and a stocking and ordinary shoe can be drawn over it. The invention is one which will assuredly be considered a boon by those who need it. The sole makers are Messrs. Lilley and Skinner, 275 and 276, High Holborn.

MABEL.—I am sorry to hear such bad news about your baby; but he is evidently mending now. So you must cheer up, and look on the bright side. You should get a very useful little book which is issued by Mr. Alfred Fennings, West Cowes, Isle of Wight, called "Every Mother's Book." It contains plenty of hints which you will do well to study. I like Beecham's Tooth Paste best; it is put up in tubes and lasts a very long time. You can get it at any chemist's. Do you use flannel night-gowns for your baby? If not, commence them at once; they are so necessary for restless children, who always throw off the bed-clothes.

ART AT HOME.—It is, as you say, no easy matter to select a good style of lace curtains at an ordinary shop, and we can hardly guide your taste in the matter without further particulars than you have given. We strongly advise you to send to Samuel Peach and Sons, Lister Gate, Nottingham, for their illustrated price list. The designs of this firm are very elegant, and the quality of the lace curtains, etc., better for the price than can be obtained at any London house.

ANNUS MIRABILIS.—Claret would make your hair darker. What you want is something to make it lighter. Try washing it with Scrubb's Ammonia in hot water once a week, and you may then brush a very little peroxide of hydrogen down the length of the hair. Possibly, after the first week, if you do this once a month or once in six weeks it would be sufficient. Salts of tartar in the water tends to make the hair lighter, but dries it very much.

